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ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.33 October 1986
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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE NO. 33 October 1986

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PIRANHA are offering 50 games and a day out for two people in the Hunt the Minson comp

104 GET FIT AND HEALTHY
Get fit and healthy with CRL and win a squash outfit. Copies of ROOM 10 on offer, too

CRASH ABC FIGURE:
101,483 Total
97,992 UK and EIRE

Cover by Ian Craig

As Autumn draws in and the nights get longer, what better way to spend and evening than curled up with a copy of CRASH? October 23rd should be a good evening . . . a whole new CRASH should be in the shops that day


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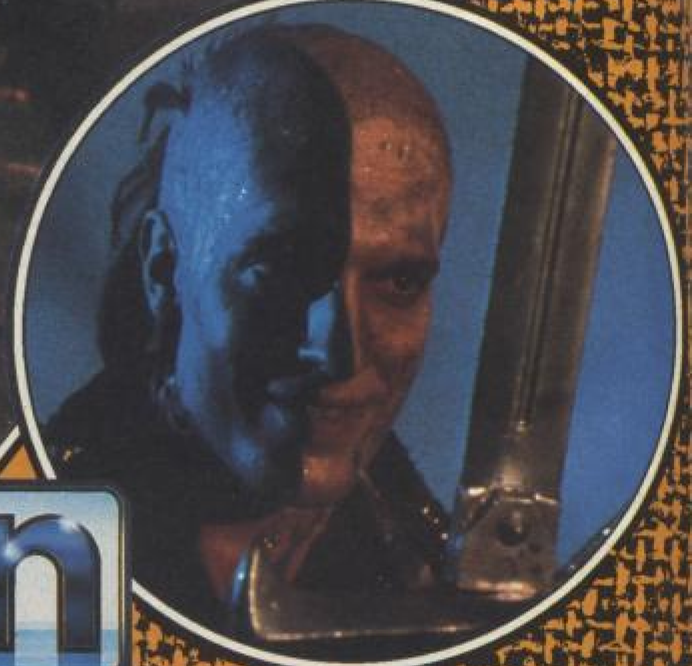
Manhattan: 1986. In a vast underground garage beneath Madison Square Garden, two men are locked in mortal combat. The huge cavern echoes with the sound of clashing steel, for although this is the 20th century, one combatant wields an ancient samurai sword, the other a broadsword. The duel is deadly earnest, ending only when the loser is decapitated. For the victor, however, it is only one more conquest in a drama he has been living for 450 years.

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Well, it finally arrived at the PCW Show. A handful of Spectrum Plus 2's were firmly bolted to the Sinclair stand and everyone was told the machine should be in the shops by the end of September.

Why Sir Clive didn't take the Amstrad approach to the 128K Spectrum in the first place will remain a mystery for ever — at the 128K launch Sinclair Research made it clear that their new computer was aimed at the games player, and the press was treated to a roomful of software houses demonstrating their new games for the 128 the moment Sir Clive stopped speaking. Yet there was no sign of a joystick port, and no cassette player on the 128 (although a tape loading meter had been incorporated into the firmware).

Perhaps typically, Amstrad have diddled around with the wiring on the joystick ports 'glued on' to the Spectrum Plus 2. They plan to sell their own, wittily named, SJS1's with the machine. Already, manufacturers are gearing up to make converters so that ordinary joysticks can be used. One company at least had a compatible stick at the PCW Show.

On closer examination, the cassette unit on the Plus 2 looks like it might first have featured in a cheapo car stereo set-up — and there is no tape counter! Silly omission, really. And the way this relaunched computer has been put together hints that it was designed to sell for rather less the the initial asking price . . .

Is the Plus 2 going to sell? Over two million people in this country alone already have a Spectrum tucked away in the house somewhere. People whose rubber-keyed friends are getting very tired may well upgrade and stay faithful to the Sinclair name. The new keyboard — a 'proper' one at last — might justify the purchase of a Plus 2 to anyone who uses a Spectrum for serious purposes. The extra memory and improved sound will appeal to Techies, Musos and Gamesters too . . . providing software houses start taking advantage of the extra facilities.

And that's what it all boils down to really. Software houses. It's a 'chicken and egg situation' when a computer is launched. People will buy a machine if there's enough software available, but software houses are only going to invest time and money in writing for new machines if the hardware sells in significant numbers. Just where ARE all those games described in the glossy leaflet that came with the first 128K Spectrum?

Maybe Alan Sugar has managed to crack the shell of this particular egg, finally allowing the 128K chicken to fly into the air . . . Or perhaps Amstrad will still tackle the entertainment side of the home computer market with a dedicated games console in the not too distant future.



Graeme Kidd

I. CRAIG

OVER THE TON!

Much celebration and jubilation up here in CRASH Towers greets the arrival of the latest set of figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations. During the period January to June this year, CRASH sold 101,483 copies a month on average — more than any other computer magazine in the country by all accounts.

Several pints of Old Flatulence Bitter will no doubt be consumed here in Ludlow when we get down to the formal celebrations, but meanwhile here's a big thank you to all the people who buy CRASH

"THANK YOU"

Now if we can only stop groups of thirty people all reading the same copy and persuade more readers to buy the magazine . . . Hmm.

Wonder if the Ludlow Mafia is ready to go national?



ON THE COVER (Twice so far)

Ian Craig recently joined the team working in the CRASH Towers ART Garret as an illustrator. Ian first featured in CRASH twelve issues ago in the ON THE COVER feature. This month, he features in CRASH yet again, this time on the cover.

Oliver Frey has produced all thirty two CRASH covers so far but has now got so busy, what with the other two computer magazines published by Newsfield and the brand new project, **L M**, that his airbrush is constantly overheating. Being a sensible sort of fellow, Ian brought his own airbrush to Ludlow with him and should be weilding it a lot more over the coming months . . .

BYE BYE (Ish)



. . . more sort of 'cheerio a bit'.

And this month is a slightly sad month for yours truly. All sorts of changes have been happening in the Towers this year, what with **L M** starting up and getting into gear ready for Christmas, and Auntie Aggie and the mail order crew moving to a new office. Gary Liddon has scurried off to London to work for Newsfield's software house, THALAMUS, Robin Candy is furthering his education at college, Ben Stone has joined the team and is busily writing comments full time now he's left school. And of course CRASH is now the biggest computer magazine in the land and has the only REAL Girlie Tipster in the form of Hannah Smith.

This issue is my 25th as Editor. It is the last issue of CRASH that has me at the helm. Don't worry, I'm not defecting — I'm not brave enough to try and control the Spiky Haired Ones over on ZZAP! like Roger Kean was. Anyway, Gary Penn is doing very nicely on ZZAP!, thankyouverymuch, and is also celebrating a chunky rise in circulation this month. And there's a good few miles left in Old Crumbly's bathchair over on AMTIX as well. No, I'm not changing magazines.

The CRASH Editorial Doc Martens have been promoted! I'll be wearing them as Publishing Executive from now on, and will be staying with Newsfield to help the editorial teams of CRASH, ZZAP! and AMTIX keep on producing their magazines.

So it's not REALLY Goodbye. More sort of, cheerio a bit.

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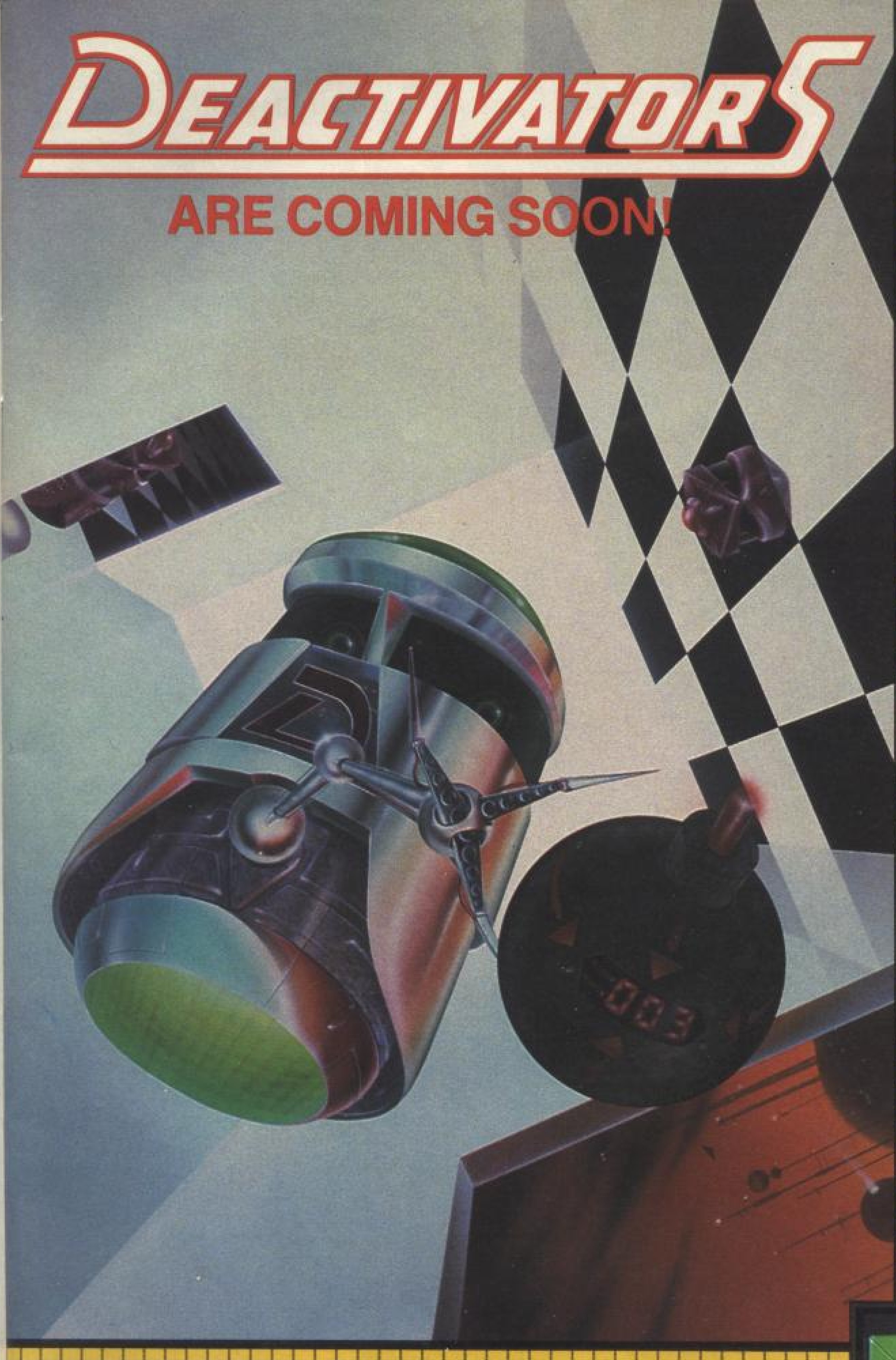
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THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD CRASH

DEACTIVATORS

ARE COMING SOON!



BAD TIMES GUYS! As head of security at the Gravitational Research Institute I am just settling down to my roast banana and garlic pie when suddenly my hotline goes! A fanatical group of saboteurs have infiltrated the Institute, planted numerous time-bombs **AND** reprogrammed my robot guards to give me a hard time!

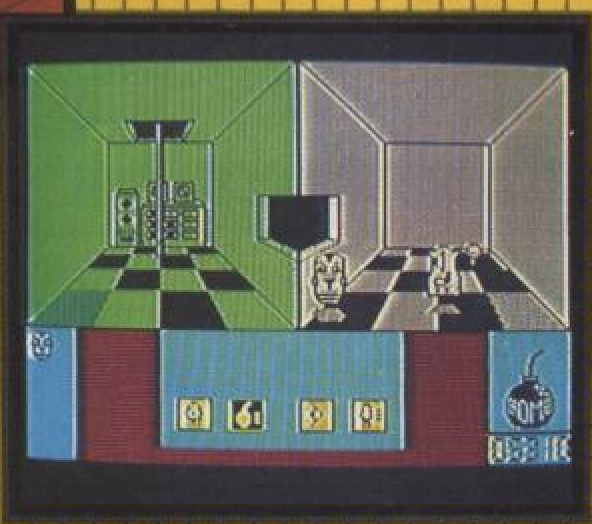
Well, that's it then! I have to call in my elite force of Deactivator Droids to clear the 5 labs and sort out the nutty guards. Of course, it's not so easy to move from room to room when floors may be ceilings and ceilings may be walls!

If they can throw the bombs out before we **ALL** end up defying the law of gravity then maybe I can finish my pie!

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ZZAP64

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ZZAP64



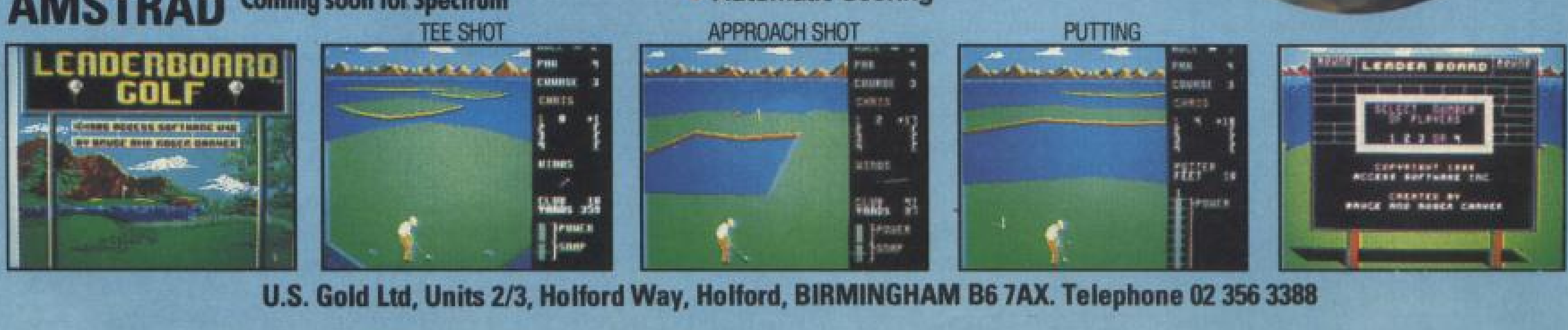
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Auntie Aggie cranes her neck, just to make sure she's in shot while serving yet another customer at the NEWSFIELD stand. Oliver Frey sniggers in the background at Uncle David's 'Mean and Moody' pose for the lens . . .





THE ANNUAL OLYMPIA EXTRAVAGANZA!

It was Showtime again in the first week of September, and off we all trotted to the Personal Computer World Show to person (or should that be Minion?) the Newsfield stand, potter round the show fearlessly seeking out the latest products for review, and generally have a good time meeting people.

Auntie Aggie was there, of course — never one to miss out on a picture, and over the weekend Oli Frey and David Western clambered down from the Artroom garret and wandered round Olympia soaking up the imagery.

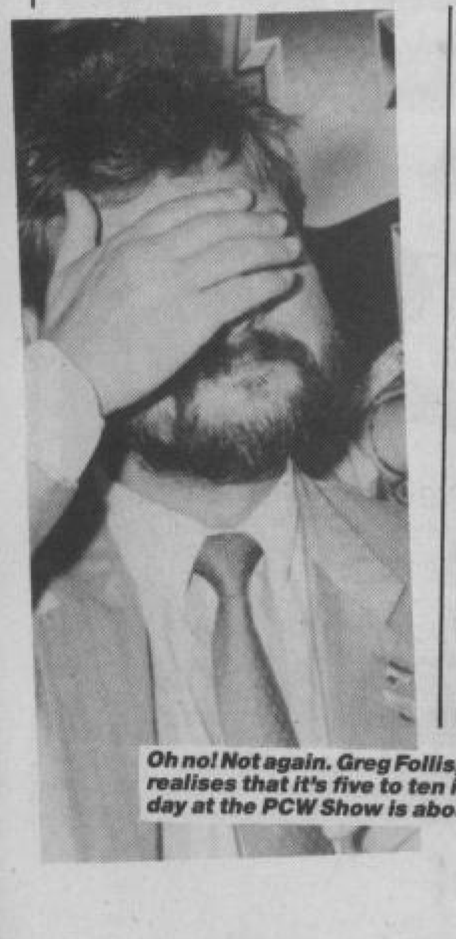
As ever, there was a roaring trade in backnumbers, shirts, caps and binders and the stand was packed to capacity — people even had to wait in the paddling pool to be served.

Paddling pool? Yes, paddling pool. The Girlie Challenge first laid down by Hannah Smith, our very own Girlie Tipster, escalated when C&VG Minions were spotted handing out rude stickers on Melissa's behalf. Almost instantaneously, Hannah responded with her very own "Stop Raving Dame! Stand up Melissa and accept the Challenge" stickers, which soon adorned just about every visitor to the show. Oodles of green jelly and a paddling pool were shipped in specially, just in case Melissa made an appearance, but despite numerous enquiries to the C&VG stand she didn't show. It seems that fictitious Tipster Melissa spent most of the PCW Show quaking in the Ladies — every time we asked where she was, we were told the dear girl was 'powdering her nose'.

Which led to speculation that Melissa must have a very large nose indeed . . .



Gorgeous pouting Dave Carlos, PR Cutie of the month interfaces his frontage with the frontage of DOMARK's stand. Now the Doc Martened One has grown a beard, people keep saying Mr Carlos and our Editor are related. Only in waist size, surely?



Oh no! Not again. Greg Follis, on the FASTER THAN LIGHT stand realises that it's five to ten in the morning and another hectic day at the PCW Show is about to begin. . . .

KONAMI GO SOLO

Japanese coin-op masters, KONAMI announced during the course of the PCW Show that they would be handling future conversions of their arcade games for the Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore.

Following a series of highly successful releases licenced to IMAGINE, THE EDGE were granted the rights to *Shao Lin's Road* which should be complete in time for a review next month. But from here on in, KONAMI games will be published for home micros by KONAMI.

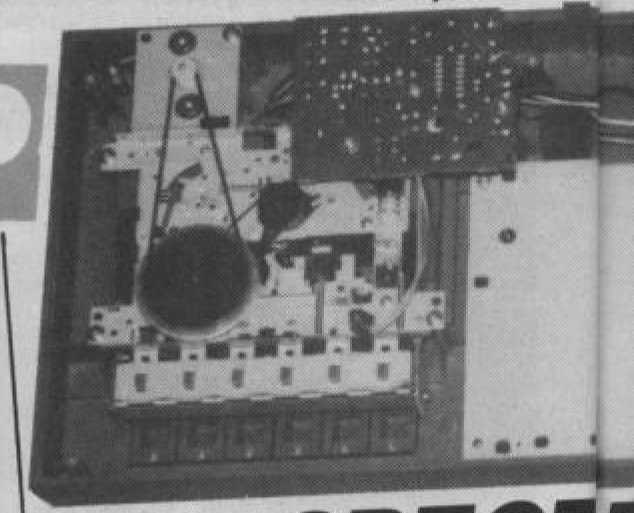
First in line for conversion is *Salamander*, which has apparently been breaking coin-op records all over Europe, while *Jail Break*, *Nemesis*, *Super Basketball* and *Iron Horse* and just waiting their turn to arrive on the Spectrum.

VIDEO NICEY!

Ace cartographer Kevin Payne collects his prize for producing the best map of *Saboteur* in the competition DURELL hosted in the pages of CRASH. Tim Hine hands the Hi-Tech prize over as Kevin smiles sweetly for the camera. Ready to map *Saboteur II* now Kevin?



Laid bare, with its works there for all to see: the Spectrum Plus 2, a tidied up version of the 128. On the far left is the underside of the Datacorder, while heatsinks abound round the compact circuit board.



BUBBLY AND BOP

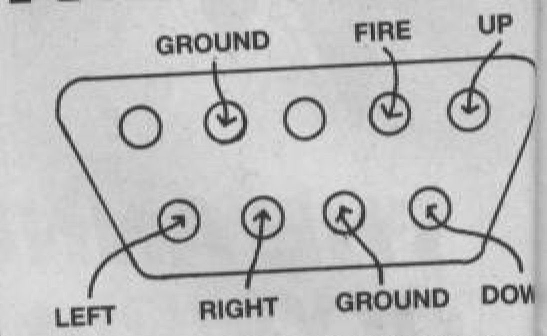
The champagne cork popped, the photographer's bulb flashed and Tracey Robinson of Hove collected her prize in the *Dynamite Dan II* competition. What a high society celebration there was on MIRRORSOFT's stand at the PCW Show! Rod Bowkett the creator of *Dynamite Dan* came along specially, to shake Tracey's hand while Pat Bitten from MIRRORSOFT looked on and our own beloved Editor Graeme Kidd hid his tatty Doc Martens from view. A civilised celebration indeed.

— Then Hunter S Minson turned up — his finely attuned hearing perfectly capable of hearing a champagne cork pop over the 146 Decibel background noise generated by the crowds. Everyone else had managed with paper cups, but Hunter S . . .





THE SPECTR



Spectrum Plus Two joystick socket wiring (view of socket 1 or 2)





The ELECTRIC DREAMS pyramid was one of the strangest stands at the show. Inside the pyramid they sharpened razor blades and Mel Croucher demonstrated his new interactive video games to small, invited audiences

GOING SHOPPING. . . .

The winners of the RAINBIRD Karting competition certainly had a good shopping trip with Tony Rainbird — his wallet contained £2,000 and he spent every penny!

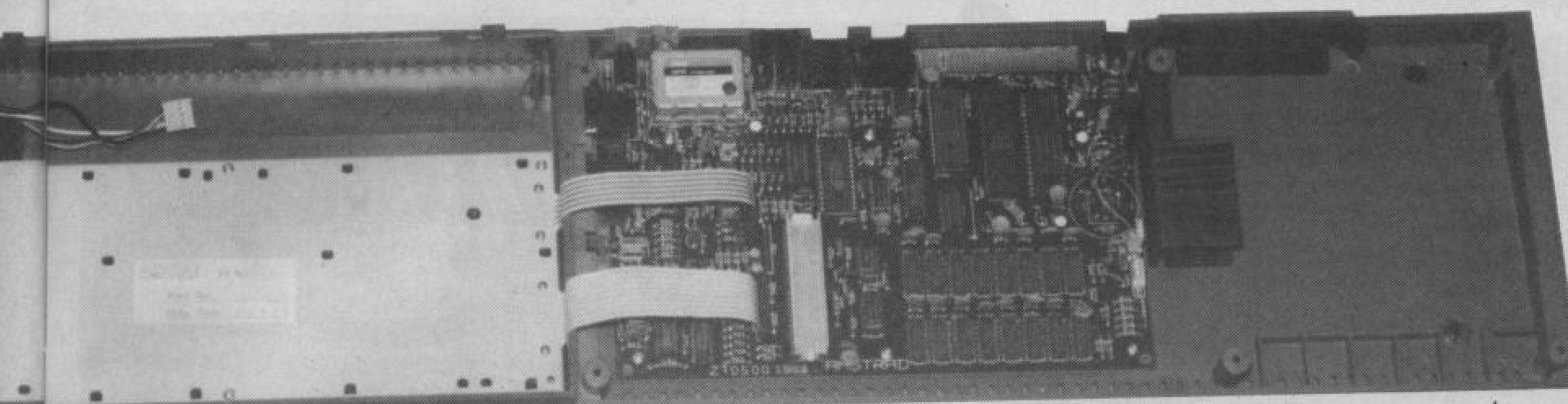
Originally, the winners and their families were due to take a trial spin in Tony's Kart at the Hoddesden Kart Club, but the heavens opened and rain stopped play as the sports writers say. So it was off to the Zip Kart showroom for copious advice before much examination of the price lists. Eventually the two winners managed to spend £1,000 each on the bits and pieces that are needed to put together a competition kart, and it was time to go for a celebration meal. Soon John Hirst and Alan Myers will be zooming around the track in their 100mph karts — once they've assembled the kit of parts they took home with them. Could prove a little tricky — there are no instructions!



John Hirst, who set out with his family at 3.00am to travel from Lancashire to the showroom and Alan Myers, a Windsor lad, pose by one of the karts in the Zip Kart showroom.

There were a lot of strange people at the show this year — apart from the ZZAP! Spiky Haired Ones. Asterix the Gaul handed out leaflets down by the MELBOURNE HOUSE stand, a robo-dancing Ninja character lurked around THE EDGE and a cute talking robot accompanied ARIOLASOFT. Somehow, PIRANHA persuaded Nosferatu the Vampyre to break with Vampyre Union rules and turn up in the daytime, too . . .





TRUM PLUS TWO LAID BARE . . .

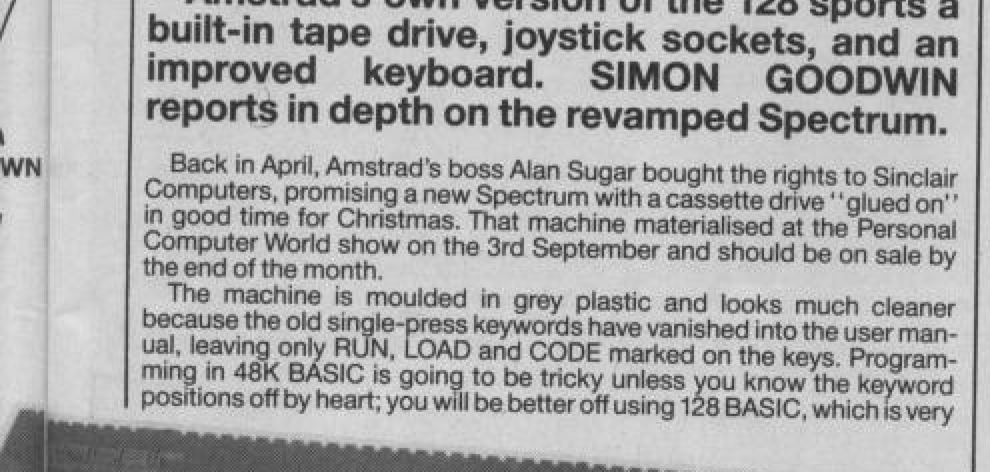
WN

The Spectrum 128 is dead — long live the Spectrum 128 Plus Two!

Amstrad's own version of the 128 sports a built-in tape drive, joystick sockets, and an improved keyboard. SIMON GOODWIN reports in depth on the revamped Spectrum.

Back in April, Amstrad's boss Alan Sugar bought the rights to Sinclair Computers, promising a new Spectrum with a cassette drive ''glued on'' in good time for Christmas. That machine materialised at the Personal Computer World show on the 3rd September and should be on sale by the end of the month.

The machine is moulded in grey plastic and looks much cleaner because the old single-press keywords have vanished into the user manual, leaving only RUN, LOAD and CODE marked on the keys. Programming in 48K BASIC is going to be tricky unless you know the keyword positions off by heart; you will be better off using 128 BASIC, which is very



The Spectrum Plus 2 as it appeared on the Sinclair stand at the PCW Show. Note the cunning resemblance to the choccy cake we featured in TECH TIPS a little while ago . . .

similar but expects commands to be entered character by character. The manual says that 48K BASIC is 'not recommended for anything other than a history lesson for the curious.'

KEYBOARD

The new keyboard is excellent; the only reason I can think that anyone might want to replace it is because there is still no semi-colon key between I and ENTER where touch typists expect to rest their right little finger. The 'feel' seemed fine on every machine I tested, although as usual for Amstrad there was some variation between individual computers. The wiring pattern is still an 8 by 5 grid, so add-on keyboards will work but I doubt that many people will feel the need for an up-grade even if they use the machine for several hours a day.

CASSETTE

The cassette drive is very rudimentary. There is no auto-stop when you rewind or fast forward, so you may damage the motor or mechanism if you forget to press STOP.

Winding is very slow: it takes about a minute to rewind a C15 — 50% slower than the drive on the CPC 464. The tape pinchwheel is unusually small and will need regular cleaning. Sadly, there's no tape counter.

A small hole allows access to the Azimuth alignment screw, so it should be possible to correct problems caused by minor knocks. The drive is held together with self-tapping screws, so you will probably have to replace the lot if anything serious goes wrong. There is no input for an external tape recorder, so any fault on the built in drive will force you to return the whole computer for repair.

CONNECTORS

Apart from the tape input, all of the Spectrum 128 sockets appear on the Spectrum Plus Two. There are telephone sockets for the keypad (apparently unavailable) and the combined RS232 MIDI output for serial printers or synthesizers. Any serial printer will work in 128 BASIC, although the COPY command expects one that recognises Epson quad-density bit image graphics. Printer control codes are ignored unless you use a couple of POKES — details in next month's TECH TIPS.

There are sockets for RGB TTL, Composite Video and TV displays, plus a sound output socket which carries cassette tones, BEEP output and notes from the three-channel sound chip. Sound is also mixed into the TV signal, but there's no built-in speaker and the sound output is much too weak to drive headphones without an amplifier.

Two joystick sockets on the left hand side of the machine can be read with IN 61438 and IN 63486 — the Interface 2 protocol. The sockets are standard nine pin ones, but they use a non-standard wiring arrangement (see diagram). You can re-wire a normal stick to use that pin layout but you shouldn't try to use a modified stick with other computers. One of the changed pins is used as a power source by other manufacturers, so a modified stick could short out the power supply!

A suitable joystick, the SJS1, is available as an option with the machine, along with six games. Prices are not fixed as I write, but should be around £150 for the machine, or £160 for the computer, stick and games. Rumour has it that Amstrad pay $2 for each joystick — the SJS1 is cheap and nasty, as are the bundled games — apparently so dire that they might as well be six blank tapes . . .

You would be wise to get the machine alone and pay £9 or £15 for a CHEETAH 125 or Mach 1 joystick. Both have autofire, twin connectors — for the Plus Two or any other machine — and are much more durable than Amstrad's offering. I particularly liked the Mach 1. Alternatively, get a standard stick and a Plus Two adaptor from CHEETAH or FREL.

MANUAL

The new manual is the best yet, though it is a pity that it has been perfect bound like a paper back, rather than spiral bound. It consists of about 200 monochrome pages, with a good index. Most of the material comes form Stephen Vickers' excellent orange manual for the original Spectrum, but Rupert Goodwins (from Sinclair) and Ivor Spital (from Amstrad) have added full details of the Spectrum 128's add-ons without spoiling the overall style. There is lots of useful information about the 128 system and the new connectors, although a few more examples would have come in handy. Overall, though, it is a good reference guide and a helpful BASIC tutorial.

INSIDE INFO

After much bowing and scraping, I persuaded Amstrad to let me dig around inside the machine — I also managed to sneak a copy of the ROM onto cassette, so I've got a pretty good idea how it all works. In essence, the Plus Two is a tidied version of the 128; the same ULAs form the basis of the system although they now sport heatsinks and Amstrad part numbers. The power regulator heatsink is inside the box, around the tape drive — it looks chunky enough to prevent overheating.

There's a power indicator light and a reset button but no on-off switch. The edge-connector is recessed slightly more than previously, so you should check that add-ons will fit properly — most will connect up without problems, and Sinclair's own Interface One is said to be fully compatible.

The Plus Two packs the 16K Interpreter and 16K Editor/RAM disk driver into one 32K ROM chip. The BASIC code differs from that of the original Spectrum in ten places. Most of the changes deal with the keypad and the paging mechanism for the Editor. As on the 128, 1K unused in the original ROM contains new code, this will screw up efficient programs that use Interrupt Mode 2 but most software houses are aware of this problem and can code around it. The other changes are localised and should not cause any incompatibility — for instance the machine announces that it is now 'Copyright Amstrad' rather than Sinclair Research, and the SAVE message asks you to 'Press REC and PLAY'.

All in all this is an attractive up-grade for anyone who already owns a Spectrum. Unlike the 128, the Plus Two is here to stay.

Photo: HBA Photographic Services

Fear & Loathing



HUNTER S MISSING



Amanda Barry, who looks rather like she would make a worthy competitor in a Hunter S Minson eating competition, gets her teeth into her new job as ARIOLASOFT's Press Officer. Press Officer? Dangerous thing to be when Hunter S is about. . . .

It is with a certain amount of regret that I inform you, Hunter S Minson is missing. Regret tinged with relief, I confess, because CRASH's very own gonzo hack can also be a prime pain in the posterior. But mainly regret, because for all his failings, life is never dull when Minson is around.

But we are currently Mins-less. He has gone AWOL before, vanishing for days on beastly binges of the most hedonistic kind. I have no doubt that he will turn up again soon. Let's just hope that he does nothing criminal. And God save those sober citizens who come into contact with him.

I have known Minson for years, acting as his personal assistant. Many's the time he has handed me a garbled cassette tape with a curt instruction to "Make sense of this goddam crap!" I've edited his most recent ramblings in an attempt to explain his disappearance.

I pick up the story with Minson continuing his quest for sherbert. Once he's on a sherbert binge there is little one can do but humour him. But let Minson tell the story . . .

"There is nothing remotely Swiss about Llamas, but then again there is nothing remotely Swiss about Swiss Cottage in North London, so it was probably a logical place for the lig to launch the HEWSON/**Jeff Minter** *marriage.*

"Minter, you mumble, equals Commie-unist. Quite right. And what was I doing in such unsalubrious circles, other than watching the fleshy, white, wobbly bits of overweight Holiday Inn-habitants as they used the exercise bikes in the pool next door? Well, I'd heard rumours that this was a likely source of sweet satisfaction.

"I quickly cornered the very blonde and very beautiful Julia Coombs and quizzed her about the Fizz Connection, but all she would talk about was forthcoming HEWSON *releases.*

One of these goes by the name of City Slicker. It allows you to roam round all my favourite London haunts in search of the bomb disposal kit that will stop a latter day Guy Fawkes blowing up the Houses of Parliament — though why you'd want to hinder a public benefactor is beyond me!

"You can actually enter some of the London landmarks, though the Holsten No 1, home of so many great HEWSON *launches, is sadly not among them. Pity as a game of grab-the-free-food-and-avoid-the-drunken-hack could have been most amusing!*

"The Swiss Cottage nosh was great though, and the blue cheese and grape sandwiches were powerful enough to melt your socks (in fact, socks is what they smelt like!) but not powerful enough for me. My system craved a greater stimulant and, good ol' HEWSON *. . . my prayer was granted.*

"As is usual on HEWSON *ligs, all of us hacks were handed our own little press packs containing a plastic toy and something to munch on during the long journey back to town . . . rather like Santa's grotto!*

"Well, this being a Minter extravaganza, we all got plastic sheep or rams (cue RAM pack wobble jokes). Then, as I dived down to scrape the bottom of the sack, what other fitting souvenir did I find? None other than the required white powder, encased in candy flying saucers that tasted like expanded polystyrene. My joy was complete. I guzzled the lot before Baker Street."

At this stage Minson's ramblings become incomprehensible. Under the influence of the deadly sherbert he dictated the following. I have made no attempt to translate into anything resembling English.

"Right . . . get this. I'm going to King's College in London, berk. No, Berk. BERK!!! Hero of a new TV show, Trapdoor. *Launching it all today. I'm on my way."*

(There is a break in the tape as he steps into a taxi.)

"King's College. Great Hall of some sort, full of cuddly toys and kiddies' wellies, with a big TV screen at one end and what do we have here? Mandy! Hi!"

(At this stage **Mandy Keyho** of PIRANHA can be heard talking to an unidentified companion.)

"Oh no! Look who it is. Yes, the one we digitised . . . Well, show him the game then."

(Dialogue, mostly indistinct, as Minson examines the *Trapdoor* game.)

"Jeesus! This is great. Are you getting all of this. This is the best animation I've ever seen on the Spectrum. This is brilliant. I just can't believe it . . .

"Try to explain . . . make some sense of this, Laszlo . . . cut that last bit . . . and that too . . . you know what I mean. Right . . . go again. You have to control Berk, a BIG sprite. BIIIG! Make him follow the orders of the master upstairs. Things like getting some eyeball crush.

"Eyeball crush. Reminds me . . . I'm thirsty. See you later, Mandy."

(An audible sigh of relief.)

"Hey, Cookie. Come here. Isn't this going to be big. BIIIIGG! Hey, what's the food like?"

Once again the tape becomes virtually incomprehensible, but using the latest scientific techniques I managed to deduce the following. The food was excellent, in particular a walnut meringue gateau. Minson and his companion entered upon an eating competition.

"Five pieces. I've never seen anything like it. They should call you Trapdoor . . . "

At this point the tape ran out and so did Minson, into the traffic of the Strand, totally deranged on a deadly mix of meringue and the lingering effects of sherbert.

And that has been all, apart from a garbled phone call at 4.07am last Tuesday.

"Hey, Laszlo, you old crud. How are ya? You'll never guess. Hawaii. Wild times, I can tell you. Surfers everywhere. And the waves. Wild . . .

"But let me tell you. Somebody just shipped me a copy of some other Commie publication. ZZIP or KKRAP or something. Have you seen it. HAVE YOU SEEN IT? Take a look then! Some squid called The Shadow *tries to slag me off.*

"No, of course I'm not going to sue. I might do them physical harm, but sue . . . no way! I could slag myself of better than that. They've missed out on everything. Been reduced to fabricating stories. It's pathetic!

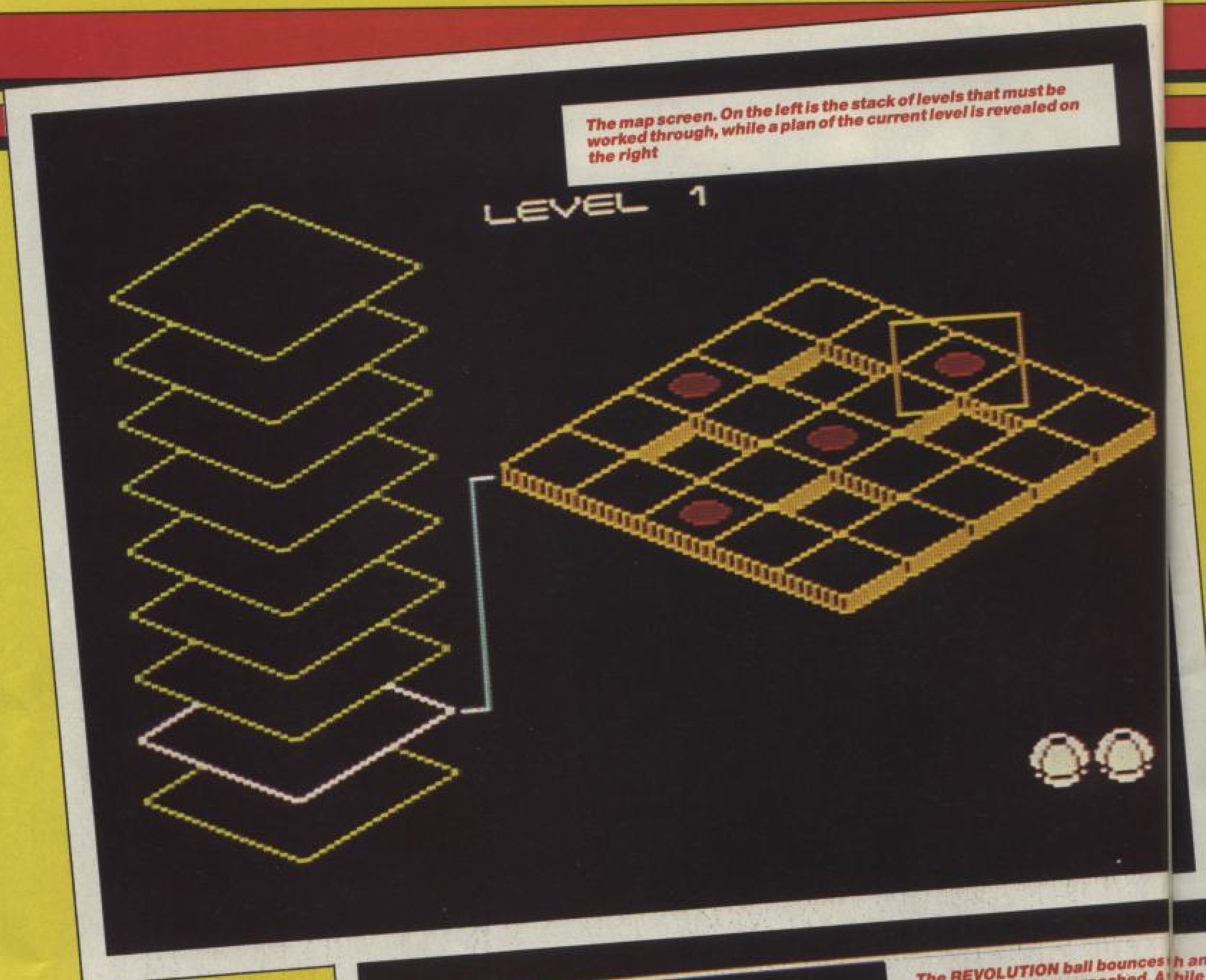
"And hiding behind that pseudonym. Well, I knows that the Shadow's nose is just in front of his THALAMUS, *but I can keep the Lid-on.*

"Laszlo, listen. Gotta go. Going harpoon fishing. Caught a Californian kid on a surfboard yesterday. Cooked him myself. Had him for dinner."

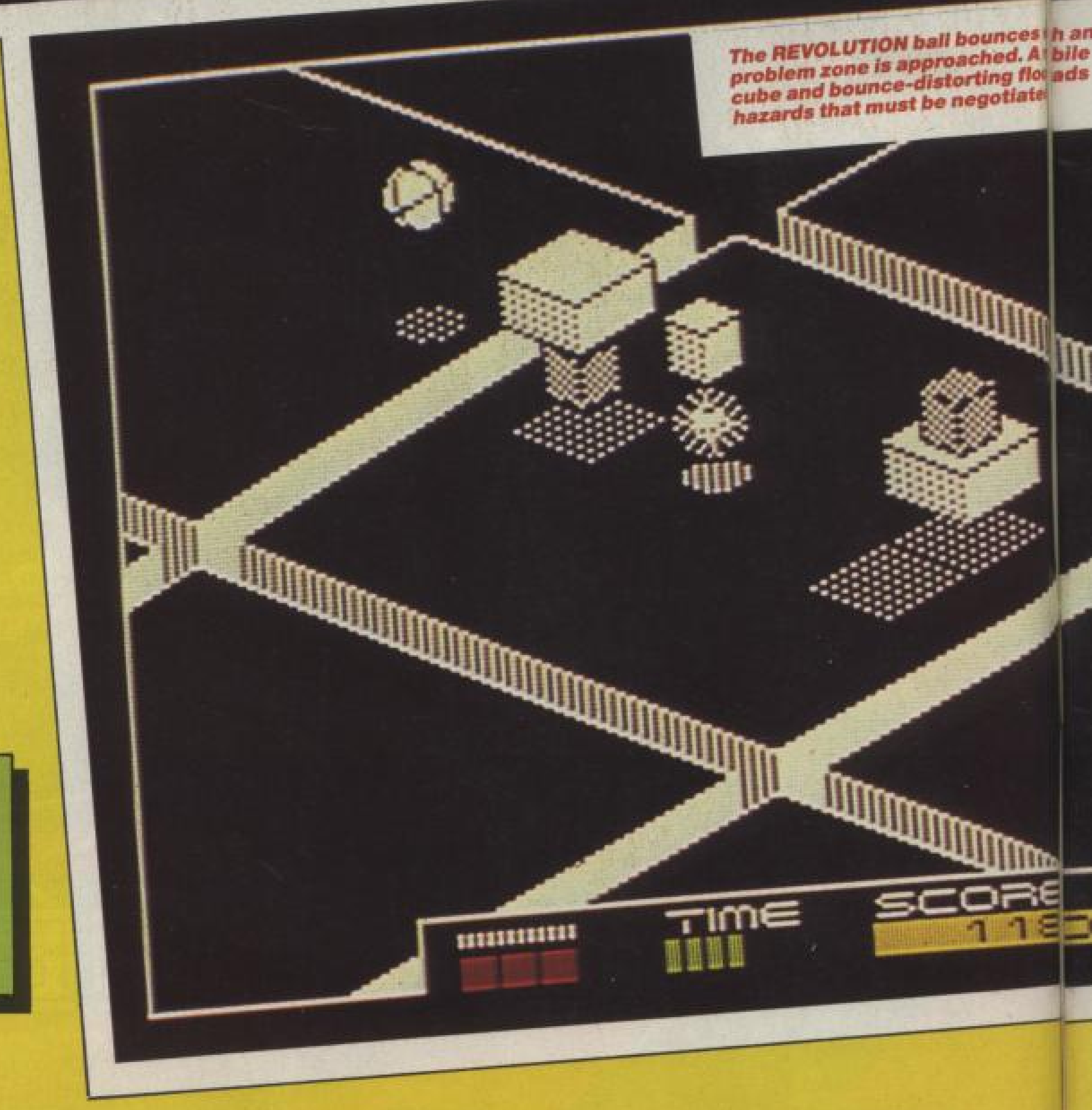
Whether Minson was actually in Hawaii remains unclear. However it is expected that he will reappear in time for that spectacle that makes the decline of Rome look like a vicarage tea party, the PCW show!

Laszlo Sandow


ALLEYKAT
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The map screen. On the left is the stack of levels that must be worked through, while a plan of the current level is revealed on the right



The REVOLUTION ball bounces h an problem zone is approached. A bile cube and bounce-distorting flo ads hazards that must be negotiate

Producer: Vortex
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Costa Panayi**

REVOLUTION

A CRASH Smash

Vortex has an enviable reputation that spans virtually the entire history of Spectrum gaming, largely thanks to the programmer Costa Panayi (*Android, Android II, TLL, Cyclone, Alien Highway and Highway Encounter*) whose preoccupation with 3D representation has made each game outstanding and usually innovative. Now he's turned his talents to something completely different with *Revolution*.

In this 3D game you control a versatile bouncing ball and the idea is to solve various puzzles on each game level. The action takes place on huge platforms suspended above bottomless ravines. Gaps of varying distance separate each platform, some are small and easily bounced over, while others are vast and take a lot of bouncing to get over. Being a bottomless ravine, going over the edge always ends in death for your ball. You move around by either bouncing or rolling. If for any reason the ball becomes stationary then you can get it bouncing again by using extra super bounce. A red bar indicator is provided to show the height of bounce being achieved, letting you estimate the amount of strength needed to reach an objective.

But what about the puzzles? They're all identical in concept and consist of deactivating two grey boxes set a distance apart from each other. Touching a box with your ball turns it white and deactivates it for a short length of time. Next you must get your ball over to the other grey box and turn this white as well before the first block turns grey again in order to complete each puzzle. All fine and dandy. However, apart from the extremely short deactivation time limit, each puzzle contains various nasties, some animated some not. Like all nasties, they're convinced that what you're trying to do is wrong and are all out to stop you.

The animated ones scoot around just above the ground at great speed and any contact has disastrous results — your ball may be given a swift nudge, knocking it off course or even be sent over the platform edge to its doom.

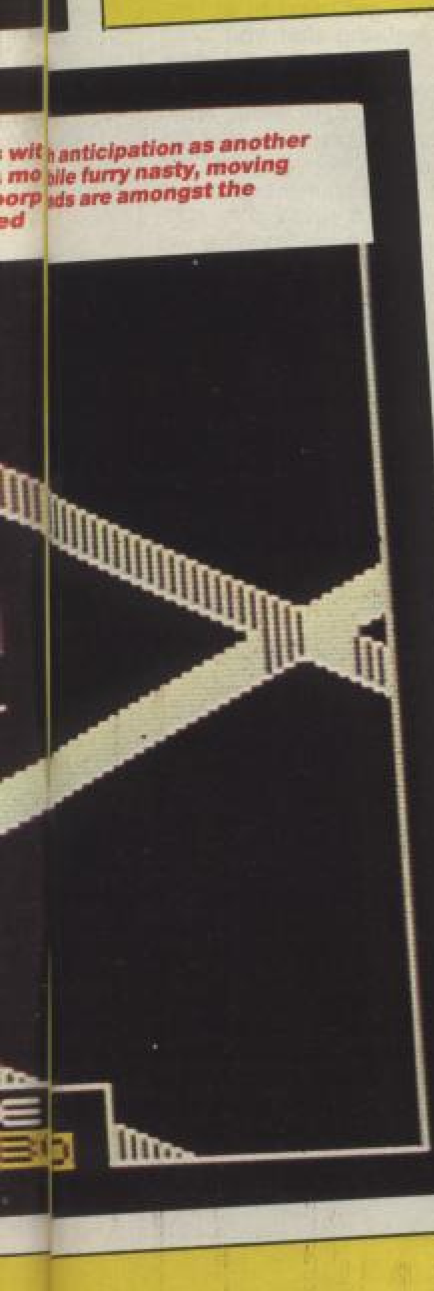
Despite their savagery, the stationary perils are probably the hardest to negotiate. Arrows on the ground scoot your ball rapidly towards the direction in which they point. This either keeps you away from the block you're aiming for, or once again sends you to your death off the edge. Solid patches of grid act as super bouncing plates and might fling you off the side or sproing you in completely the wrong direction again. The furry nasties with their waving flagella-like protrusion are instantly lethal and if your ball touches any of these then a life is lost.

Each level must be completed before an automatic lift transports your sphere to a higher grade. There are nine levels in total in the game, each with progressively more and harder puzzles. The position of puzzles on a level is indicated by red circles on a map, shown on at the start of a level. During play the map screen can be accessed by pressing the M key. Your starting position (which is rarely the same) is also shown on this map by a yellow rectangle.

Five lives are provided for each game. When you lose one a new ball is shunted out of dock and automatically placed on the lift. This carries the ball up to the correct level and it's then up to you to control where it goes.

On higher levels the deactivation time limit gets shorter and there is an overall time limit to each game shown by the descending green bar at the bottom of the screen. Beside it sits the score chart showing how many puzzles have been completed. A set amount of points is scored for each puzzle depending on its difficulty.

Just because you've managed to complete the game once don't think playing it through is a doddle — each time a new game starts the puzzles and their positions are redistributed amongst the levels randomly!



...wit anticipation as another ...mo bile furry nasty, moving ...orp ds are amongst the ...ed

CRITICISM

" I've been waiting for Costa Panayi to come back to the Spectrum scene since I finished Highway Encounter**, and he certainly has come back well.** Revolution **is excellently presented with most of the 'Costa Magic' which means it's very good and addictive. However its addictivity only works in short bursts. Most time is spent wandering around a lot of black background, and when I got to a problem I found I could often spend ages trying out the some boring method tens of times. The ball moves around pretty effectively, although it seems too accurate and doesn't give the realism of** Bounder **or the playability of** Gyroscope**, which it vaguely resembles. It's certainly nothing like** HE **and is quite original in what content there is. Many people should be quite addicted by the problem solving and random level layouts, but I couldn't see enough in it to compare with Costa's previous game. "**

CRITICISM

" What a pretty game, but what would you expect from the person who did the graphics (and programming) for the Highway **games. Not only has this game got pretty graphics it also has plenty of addictive qualities and plenty of playability. It's set in a very original playing arena and provides tasks which get progressively harder to complete as you go up the levels. The graphics are exquisite, your ball is excellently animated and well detailed as are all the other characters. Sound is a little lacking although there are a lot of nice spot effects but no tune on the title screen. The control is a bit dodgy at first but after some persistence it does get easier. I strongly recommend this one as it is exceedingly playable. "**

CRITICISM

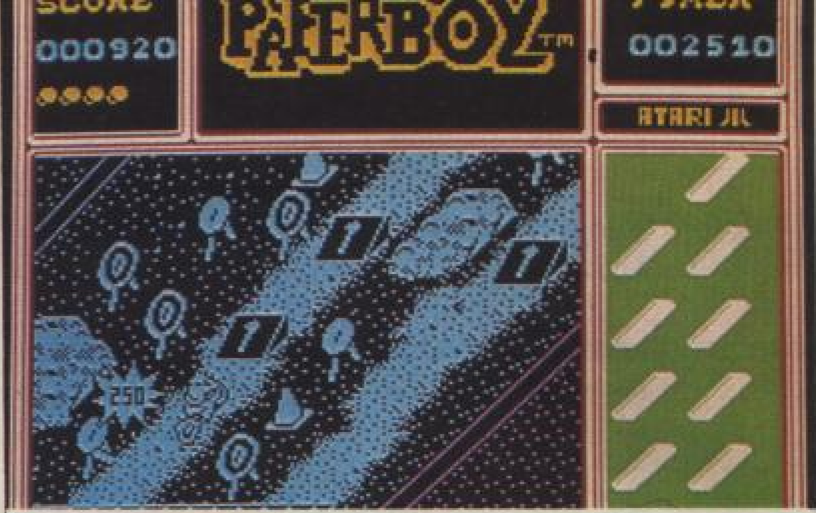
" Another 3D game from VORTEX, and what a good one it is, too. The puzzles are very difficult to complete, but this only makes the triumph on completing them all the more satisfying, rather than frustrating, as in some games. The graphics are superb, and Costa Panayi deserves a hefty pat on the back for them. The whole thing is very good indeed. Whilst being a departure from the old games by this author, Revolution **still seems to have something that relates it to the** Highway **games. I like it! "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A forward/back; K/L left/right; Z to N or SPACE for bounce energy
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: combination key presses allow for diagonal movement, making control tough at first
Use of colour: virtually monochrome but effective
Graphics: great animation, generally excellent
Sound: good spot effects, no title or game tunes
Skill levels: progressive
General rating: An unusual and good looking game that provides a real challenge

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	91%
Playability	90%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	88%
Overall	**91%**

PAPER BOY



On the BMX track at the end of town. 250 points have just been awarded for a direct hit on a target, the paperbag is full and there are ramps ahead . . .

Producer: Elite
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Steve Lamb and Tony Mac**

In ELITE's conversion of the arcade game *Paperboy* it's up to you, as an all American skoolkid, to deliver the early morning newspapers fighting against fantastic odds. Negotiating your BMX bike around what seems to be a rather unsavoury neighbourhood, hazards have to be avoided — but lots of points are waiting to be won for accurate lobbing of newspapers.

Certain households on your round don't order the Daily Sun, the paper which you are so diligently trying to deliver. This is sad, but you can get your own back on these non-subscribers. Pedalling through the diagonally scrolling landscape, points can be collected by bunging a newsprint missile through a window on a house with a dark door — the occupants don't take the Sun. Well-aimed newspapers can result in broken window panes, chopped up tomb stones and ruffled dustbin lids, too. If you're feeling particularly vindictive then grannies can be zapped out of their bath-chairs as they take the morning air, boys can be knocked off their mopeds and flowers flattened.

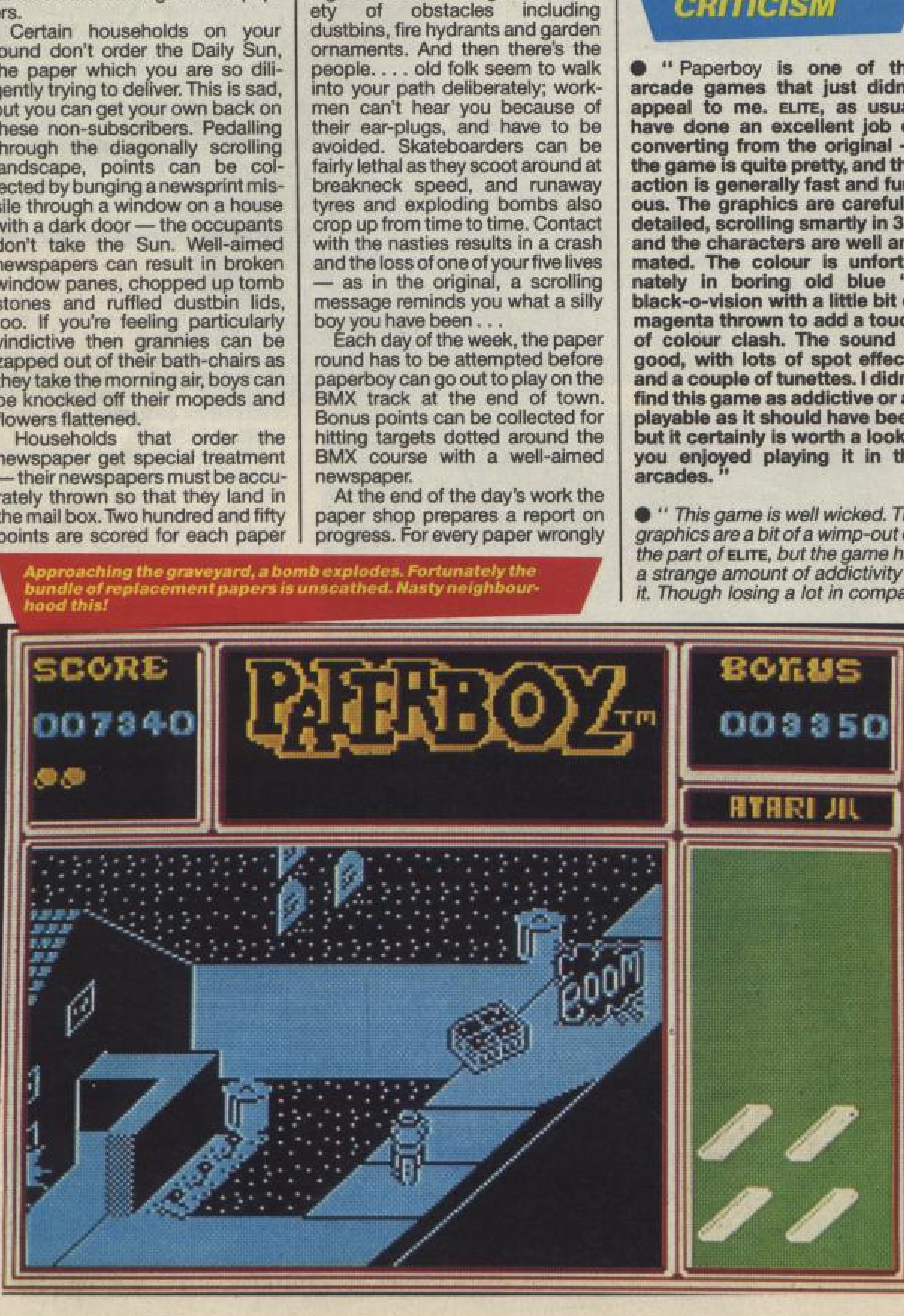
Households that order the newspaper get special treatment — their newspapers must be accurately thrown so that they land in the mail box. Two hundred and fifty points are scored for each paper safely delivered. The papers in your delivery bag are displayed on a panel to the right of the screen, and extra ammo can be collected by cycling over the boxes of newsprint dotted around the pavements.

But there's more to being a paperboy than just chucking papers around the town. Careful cycling is called for to negotiate a variety of obstacles including dustbins, fire hydrants and garden ornaments. And then there's the people. . . . old folk seem to walk into your path deliberately; workmen can't hear you because of their ear-plugs, and have to be avoided. Skateboarders can be fairly lethal as they scoot around at breakneck speed, and runaway tyres and exploding bombs also crop up from time to time. Contact with the nasties results in a crash and the loss of one of your five lives — as in the original, a scrolling message reminds you what a silly boy you have been . . .

Each day of the week, the paper round has to be attempted before paperboy can go out to play on the BMX track at the end of town. Bonus points can be collected for hitting targets dotted around the BMX course with a well-aimed newspaper.

At the end of the day's work the paper shop prepares a report on progress. For every paper wrongly delivered, a house cancels its order and if too many of the houses cancel it's the sack! However, on subsequent rounds if all the papers are correctly delivered you win back one customer, but the game gets that little bit harder on subsequent days. It really is mean on these streets . . .

Approaching the graveyard, a bomb explodes. Fortunately the bundle of replacement papers is unscathed. Nasty neighbourhood this!



CRITICISM

● " Paperboy **is one of the arcade games that just didn't appeal to me.** ELITE, **as usual, have done an excellent job of converting from the original — the game is quite pretty, and the action is generally fast and furious. The graphics are carefully detailed, scrolling smartly in 3D, and the characters are well animated. The colour is unfortunately in boring old blue 'n' black-o-vision with a little bit of magenta thrown to add a touch of colour clash. The sound is good, with lots of spot effects and a couple of tunettes. I didn't find this game as addictive or as playable as it should have been, but it certainly is worth a look if you enjoyed playing it in the arcades. "**

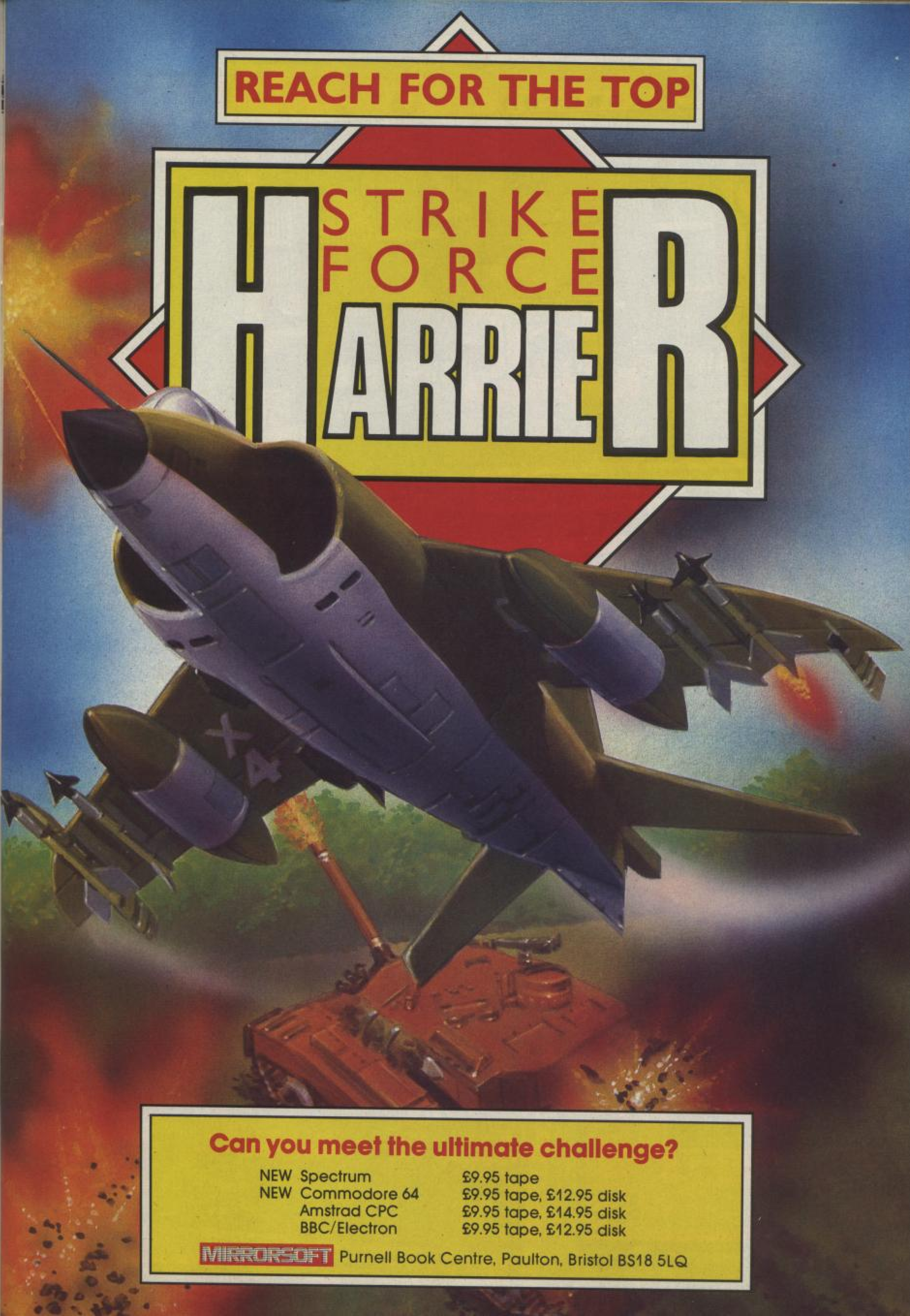
● " *This game is well wicked. The graphics are a bit of a wimp-out on the part of* ELITE, *but the game has a strange amount of addictivity to it. Though losing a lot in comparison to the original arcade version,* Paperboy *offers a good deal in the way of long term entertainment. Things like the racetrack and the old grannies make the game all the more fun to play, and the level of frustration is just right. When a drunkard comes wobbling down the road and knocks you off your bike, the urge to try again is still there. Though not as good as the* Ghosts and Goblins *and* Bombjack *conversions,* Paperboy *is still a pretty good game, and worth the asking price.* "

● "Although the game doesn't contain lots of different things to do, *Paperboy*, like most of the ELITE games, is fiendishly addictive — and once you've started there's no stopping. The graphics are extremely well drawn, and despite them all being very small, most of them are recognisable. I felt more use could have been made of the Spectrum colours. Control was quite hard to get used to at first, but after realising that you can't brake and turn at the same time, things became quite fluent. The presentation is quite bare, apart from the high-score table and the very well drawn front page of the Daily Sun. The sound was more informative than good. I'm sure that anyone buying *Paperboy* will play it for hours — but come away with the feeling 'not much to that!' "

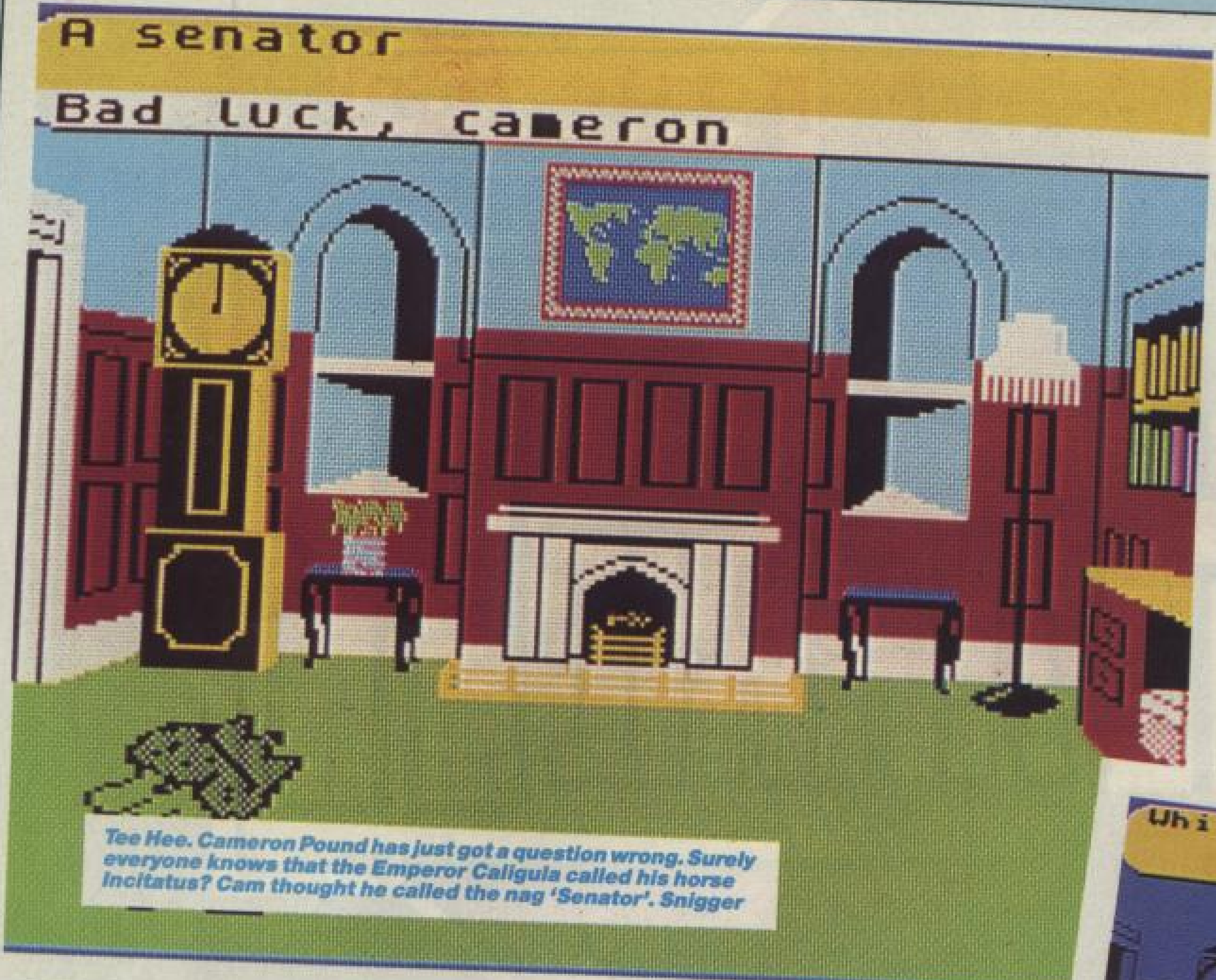
COMMENTS

Control keys: Q accelerate, A brake, O left, P right, N throw paper
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fast and responsive
Use of colour: monochromatic, for the most part, so as to avoid clashes
Graphics: nice characters, with fair scrolling
Sound: tunes, with the usual spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling township
General rating: Another slick, playable conversion from ELITE

Use of computer	84%
Graphics	86%
Playability	89%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	87%
Value for money	86%
Overall	88%


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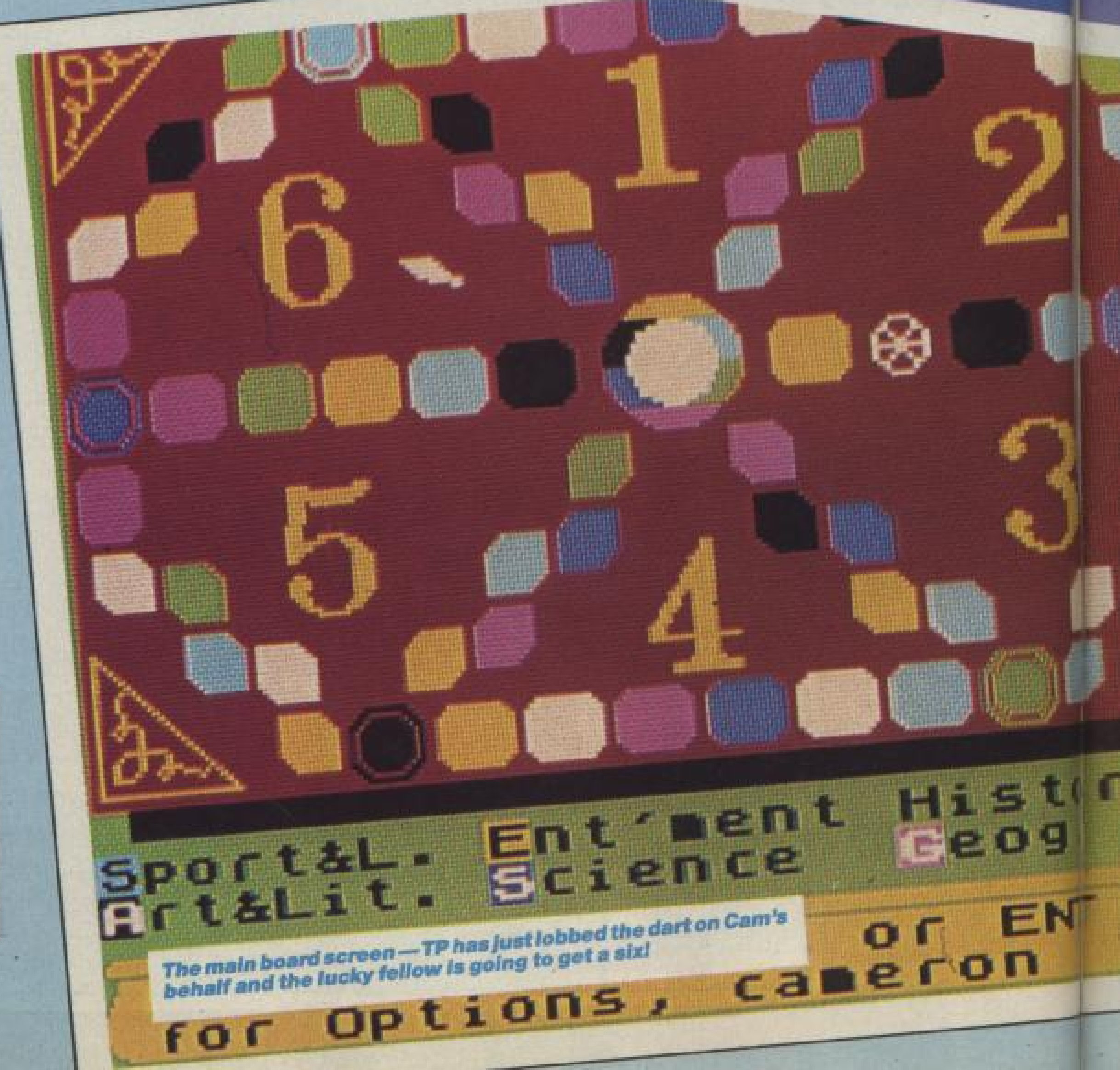
T•R•I•V•I



Tee Hee. Cameron Pound has just got a question wrong. Surely everyone knows that the Emperor Caligula called his horse Incitatus? Cam thought he called the nag 'Senator'. Snigger



One of the more visual questions ask urin DOMARK's con version of Trivial Purs



The main board screen — TP has just lobbed the dart on Cam's behalf and the lucky fellow is going to get a six!



Producer: Domark
Retail Price: **£14.95**
Author: **Oxford Digital Enterprises**

·I·A·L P·U·R·S·U·I·T·S

A CRASH Smash

If for some strange reason you didn't get a copy of the board game *Trivial Pursuit* last Christmas then fret no longer. DOMARK have just brought out *Trivial Pursuit* — The Computer Game! It's based very faithfully on the original board game with a few additions and adaptations for the computer.

Like the board game, the basic idea is for players to travel around the board answering questions and trying to collect six wedges, one for each subject. instead of throwing dice, when a player has a go the fire button must be pressed to release a dart which lands in a numbered section of the screen. The player can then move his or her counter to the highlighted space on the board. Once a player's token lands on a square a question is asked.

Well, the question isn't actually asked by the computer but instead by a very cute little character called **TP**. **TP** dons different caps depending on which subject you are attempting. Questions in each subject can be straightforward text, graphical or musical, and when your choice is made, the little master of ceremonies scampers across to the school room and fires the question at you. **TP** is an agreeable little chap and is full of congratulations if you answer correctly and full of commiserations if you don't. There's no typing in to do — shout out the answer before the time limit expires and you are asked whether you got the correct answer or not. Keying Y for yes or N for no allows the game to progress.

An option menu heads up the game. The first thing to do is enter the names of the people playing, which governs the order of play. A game can be continued or restarted. To make things just that bit more competitive you can alter the amount of time available for answering a question. The real star of the show is **TP**, but he can be sent to bed if you want a bit of peace and quiet — after all his job is very tiring! You can also turn the sound down if you're planning on playing late into the night and don't want to keep the neighbours up.

CRITICISM

" Surely there isn't anyone out there who hasn't played the board game? Everyone who has ought to get into the computer version pretty quickly — it's an excellent game. The most obvious problem of the questions occurring more than once in the same game seems to have been avoided quite well, and the option to load in more questions from cassette is there if you feel the need. Graphics are quite good, and though the board game of course has no sound, I think that the Spectrum version would have been better off without any, as some of the tunes are nigh impossible to recognise. Despite this, Trivial Pursuits **is an excellent game, and everyone with a combination of brain and Spectrum ought to get a copy of this. "**

CRITICISM

" Trivial Pursuits **seems to be the kind of game that will keep hundreds of families attached to their computers. I'm sure that it will have quite a cult following, but I feel that** Trivial Pursuits **is the kind of game that you either love or hate! The computer game is an excellent translation of the board version and keeps all the player participation that is so crucial in games of this ilk. The game features lots of useful options like the sound on/off and TP in action or not, and of course the option to load new questions which I felt was necessary if you were going to play the game more than once. TP is a very cute little character, and the way that he changes his hat for different subjects is a nice touch. As board games go, this is the best on the Spectrum, but you'll have to be a dedicated player to enjoy it, as games can go on for hours if you're not too clever. "**

CRITICISM

" Sadly Trivial Pursuits **is one game that I have never played as it always seemed to be a bit of a waste of time. If the computer version is anything to go by, the original must be a scream. Graphics and sound are not usually hot points in games of this nature but they have really been made into a large part of this game. I think the success of playing this game largely depends on the people you play with, so if you don't think you'll be able to play in a large group you shouldn't really cough up the fifteen quid that DOMARK are asking for it. "**

Even though there are lots of questions in the basic game, eventually you will have attempted them all. When this happens, a new block of questions can be loaded from the second cassette in the package — and further cassettefuls of questions are promised.

The screen layout is very similar to actual board game. There are six sections, each representing the different question subjects which are Art and Literature, Science, Geography, History, Sport and Leisure and Entertainment. At the top of the screen in the right hand corner a chart shows how many wedges each player has won. When a set of six wedges has been collected the aim is to try to get to the centre of the board and complete the game by winning.

As in the board game, a player can only compete for a wedge when the counter has been landed on one of the subject headquarters. In the schoolroom **TP** asks you questions. A clock shows you how long you've been playing and a candle reveals how much time is left to answer the current question.

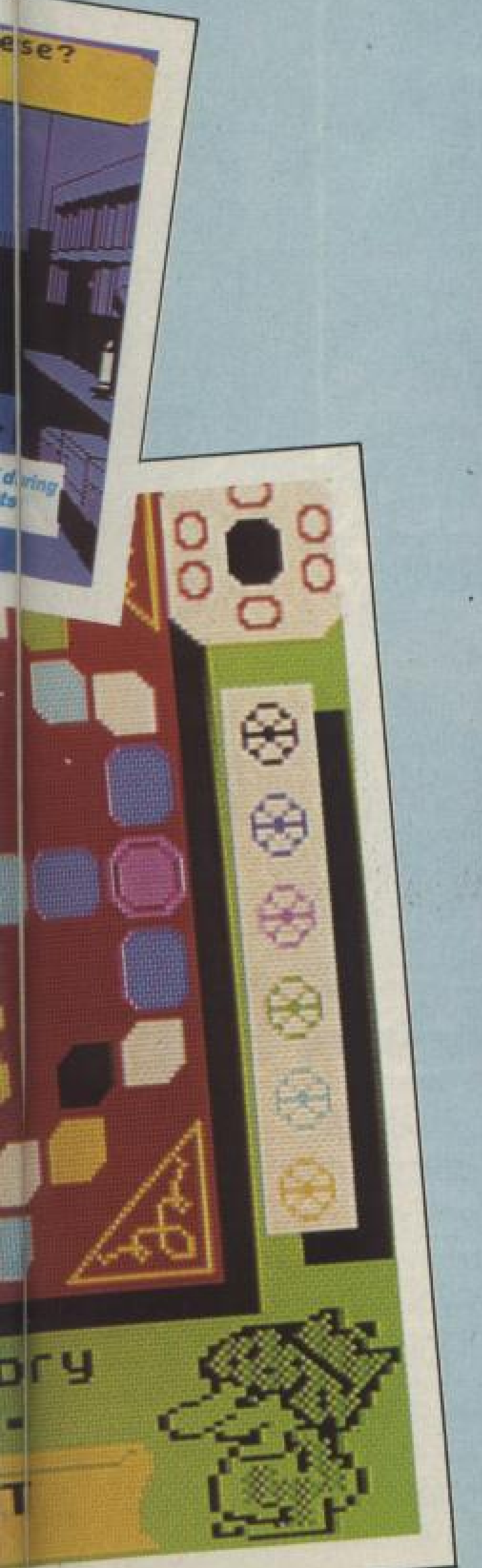
One feature on the computer game that isn't present in the tabletop version is the score board which keeps track of each player's performance and can be consulted at any stage to see how everything's going and who's currently in the lead.

Now, which sport was it in which there was an outcry when skirts were raised. . . . ?

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: no problems
Use of colour: tidy
Graphics: clear — fine for a boardgame
Sound: basic, nothing superb
Skill levels: one — but additional question tapes will be available
Screens: main board screen plus menus and 'visual' questions
General rating: A very competent conversion of a classic game

Use of computer	**88%**
Graphics	**87%**
Playability	**92%**
Getting started	**91%**
Addictive qualities	**92%**
Value for money	**86%**
Overall	**91%**





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COUNTDOWN

Producer: Macsen
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Armand Jammot**

Are you a whizz with words, nifty with numbers, a giddy gamester of the computer kind? Then perhaps this game is just up your street, especially if you're a fan of the Yorkshire TV version. A game for one or two people, *Countdown* (or *Onwuontcd* if you're an avid anagrammer) is a jumbly jaunt through vowels, consonants and knotty numbers.

There are nine rounds in this game, the first three of which involve unravelling an anagram. The idea of these is to get the best word possible from a selection of nine letters. By pressing the C or V key a player can choose a consonant or a vowel, then there are 30 seconds — the Countdown — to make a word using some or all of the letters. A green bar along the bottom of the screen which gradually shrinks as time passes, turning red when it nears the end. Below the anagram, the computer gives variations so that alternative combinations of the letters are revealed.

Mistakes may be deleted up to the last moment, and words entered are checked against the computer's own dictionary. Should the word entered not be in the dictionary, it must be verified by 'The Guardian of the Dictionary' — someone who has been appointed by the player or players to check the accuracy of words. The word can then be accepted or rejected simply by pressing the Y or N key. If the computer can make up a longer word, it is given at the bottom of the screen at the end of the game. The cumulative score is indicated in the left-hand corner of the screen.

Having won the word games, it's time to test numerical skills in the Numbers round. The player chooses six numbers from four rows, the first of which contains numbers between 25 and 100 of which up to four may be chosen, or none at all. Rows two, three and four contain numbers of a value less than 10. Having chosen these, six numbers are displayed in a row of boxes at the top of the screen. Then it's time for Cecil to do his work — Cecil is the unseen spinner who produces a random number of up to three digits to the left of the screen. It is then your task, within the 30 seconds available, to obtain this number (or the nearest you can get) by adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing the six numbers at the top. Fortunately, you don't have to use all the numbers. When time is up, the player has to enter the calculations. If you can't get close enough, Cecil displays a perfect answer just to show you how easy it really was.

Following this, there are three more word rounds followed by a numbers round. The climax of the game comes with the Countdown Conundrum in which there are 30 seconds to unscramble yet another anagram.

So, pit your wits against the computer or take on a friend or is it drienf . . . or maybe enfrid . . .

CRITICISM

●" **The TV programme is a very good, audience-involving show, but although it looks like an idea you could translate to the computer it lacks that certain something that makes you want to get it off the shelf and spend a long time playing it.** Countdown **should only be played against another person as this is the only really competitive part of the game. I found myself stuck on long words in the Countdown, but easily getting the ten points available for obtaining the correct formula to form Cecil's random number. A skill level option is sadly needed . . .** Countdown **will appeal to a limited few who like a fun game for parties, but I reckon it'll prove a little expensive for the average Countdown watcher.** "

●" Countdown *is quite good as a words and numbers game, but there are no frills, and very few thrills. The theme tune rendition is absolute BASIC rubbish, and other than boxes to highlight letters, I didn't notice any graphics, which could have brightened up the rather drab screen display. I got very little entertainment from it, and even if you're a fan of the TV series, I doubt if this would appeal to you much. I'm a little surprised that Channel 4 are giving the rights to such a game as this, because although it impersonates some of the series' features quite well, I think that this game would deter me from watching the TV show.* "

●" I used to watch the programme on the telly a couple of years ago, and I'm sorry to say that this does the show no justice whatsoever. The original's spirit has been lost along the way through the very slow play that makes it extremely monotonous. There are no graphics to speak of and the sound effects are inadequate — nice tune though. If you like the TV series and are a bit masochistic you'll probably get along quite nicely, but in general I'd stay well clear of it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: whole keyboard
Joystick: none needed



Keyboard play: very slow input
Use of colour: below average
Graphics: hardly any at all
Sound: some weak spot effects and a passable rendition of the theme tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: three: the anagram game; the numbers game and the Countdown Conundrum
General rating: Definitely not the best of TV conversions

Use of computer	40%
Graphics	5%
Playability	34%
Getting started	49%
Addictive qualities	30%
Value for money	29%
Overall	**33%**

CAPTAIN SLOG

Producer: Alpha Omega
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **David Walton**

Blueprints and Captains seem to be the theme this month: there's Captain Burt and now Captain Slog — similar jobs too. Slog supervises the construction of spacecraft on his assembly line deep in space. It's the same thing week in week out. No wonder he's a bit bored. However, the solution to his tedium is not quite what he expected — suddenly, the robot controlled space ship seems to take on a life of its own. The robots throw down their tools and decide that enough is enough and they're going to rebel against their human oppressors. In the midst of this chaos is Captain Slog. And he's not happy at all. But before he can get away and abandon his space craft, he has to find nine blueprints which will enable him to fix the transporter. This is not an easy task, however, because the robots are out to get him. Although they can't shoot at our hero, they gradually sap away his vital life energy.

Apart from the irritating and potentially lethal robots who roam around, the complex itself seems to have taken on a sinister personality of its own. Barriers of varying colours stop Slog from getting into different locations where the all important blueprints may be hidden. These barriers can be removed, however, by collecting the barrier key in the relevant colour. Other useful objects can be gathered along the way — extra energy may be picked up in the form of miniature spacemen. Bonus points can also be collected, but beware! Some artefacts sap the Captain's energy when they are in his pockets.

The troublesome robots can be exterminated by a quick blast of laser fire and points are scored for every robotic nuisance who is sent to that great scrapyard in the sky. However, once a screen has been cleared of robots and is re-visited, hey-prestŏ, the nasties have been reincarnated!

Captain Slog moves around the multi-roomed star ship by way of his jet pack which transports him nicely upwards and downwards and hopefully out of the way of the patrolling robots. With the aid of a map you can find your way around the ship but the brave Captain can only consult it when the map icon is lit up at the top of the screen.

Once a game is finished, a score screen shows just what percentage of the game you have completed based on the number of blueprints that have been collected. The chart also shows how many of the meddlesome robots have been killed off. There is a time limit to the game and obviously the quicker it's completed the higher your score is.

CRITICISM

●" **I didn't expect much from** Captain Slog. **I didn't get much either. The game is awful. The characters move about like**



idiots, and the whole game plays like a five year old's first attempt at BASIC programming. The Captain has been swiped from Project Future, **and though the game has some nice ideas, the finished product is something that isn't even worth a half of the cash asked for it.** Captain Slog **is the sort of game that really gets up my nose. "**

● " Captain Slog *resembles a game that was around a year or two ago called* Project Future *Unfortunately, this one is not half as good or half as playable. It plays quite slowly so it isn't very exciting or compelling. Graphically, things aren't much fun either; the backgrounds are drab and the characters undetailed. The sound, on the other hand, is very good; there are a couple of tunes on the title screen and a selection of spot effects during the game. Generally, this one will probably keep you interested for a wet afternoon or so and for the price you can't really complain. "*

● " Grrr! They were good when they first came out but can't the budget software companies take the phrase 'arcade/ adventure' out of their programming vocabulary. Most of these budget games are the same, all consisting of small, useless graphics. The collision detection on a range from 1 to 100 would get 0. The sound is of the basic beepy type and none of this helps in a game that cannot be played progressively — you either solve it in the first session of play or you find it so impossible that it goes into some dark dingy cupboard and you never see it again. Harsh words, you may think. But it's time the software companies grew up to the fact that the software scene is changing. Nearly every arcade/adventure budget game is the same. *Captain Slog* is all of the above and less. I just feel sorry for the people that don't read CRASH. They are the people that buy these awful games and encourage the budget software companies to publish more. End of complaint! "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: slow
Use of colour: drab
Graphics: small and undetailed
Sound: above average
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 100
General rating: Simply awful

Use of computer	48%
Graphics	24%
Playability	32%
Getting started	49%
Addictive qualities	29%
Value for money	34%
Overall	30%

1942

Producer: Elite
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dominic Wood**

The Second World War is hotting up between the wartorn countries. Out in the pacific sporadic dog fights between the warring factions rage up in the skies. The enemy forces are seriously building up their airborne craft and it's up to you to try and limit their numbers before they obliterate the goodies for good. Yup, ELITE have turned their talents to converting *1942*, a very early Capcom game.

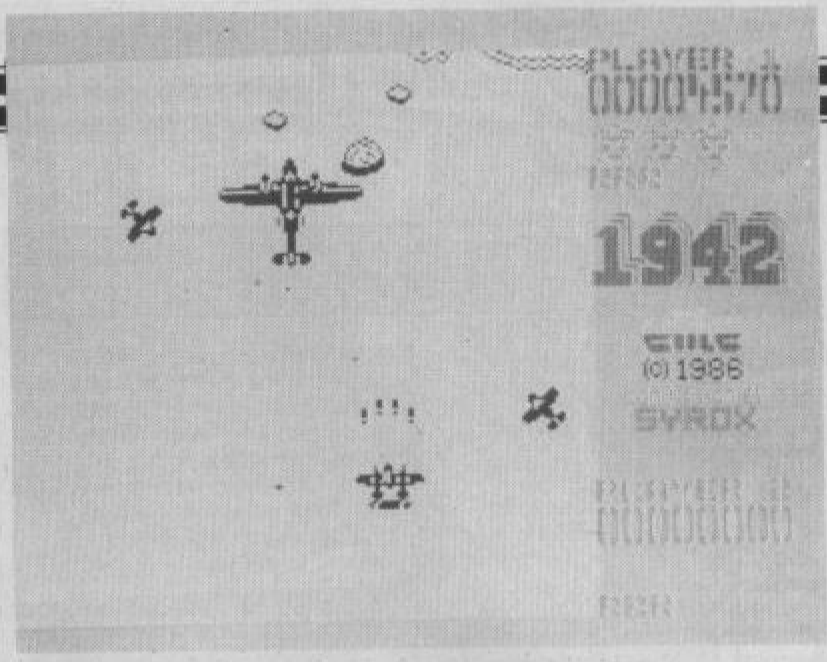
You are taken into enemy zones on the deck of an aircraft carrier. When the situation becomes too dangerous for the carrier to go any further into hostile waters it's time to fly up into the skies to meet the enemy. As usual they appear to outnumber you grossly.

The enemy are pretty mean shooters and do their best to blast heroic pilots right out of the air. However, if this wasn't enough, those dastardly baddies are so committed to their cause that they've turned into Kamakazis and will willingly sacrifice their own lives . . . They set a collision course and if they meet up with you in those lonely skies then it's curtains, and into the drink. One more life is lost from a dwindling supply.

Fortunately, ammunition is not in short supply — it's seemingly endless. Firepower can be souped up by collecting POWer points that appear at random on the screen. Just as well, as the aim of the game is to fly over enemy islands and stretches of sea shooting anything that appears in your path. The enemy are quite sneaky and sometimes appear from the rear and often follow quite random paths of flight so you never know where they're going to pop up next.

When each level is completed, return to the aircraft carrier and you are transported to the start of the next level where the fun starts again — and there are thirty two levels to fight through. There is also a two player option in the game so you can compete against someone else, and see who wins superiority in the skies first.

Apart from being able to move the plane backwards forwards and from side to side on the screen, you can also perform rolls which come in handy in tight spots. Picking up a white object in the air has a smart bomb effect, and obliterates all the enemy planes on the screen. Another chance to be a hero of the skies comes your way



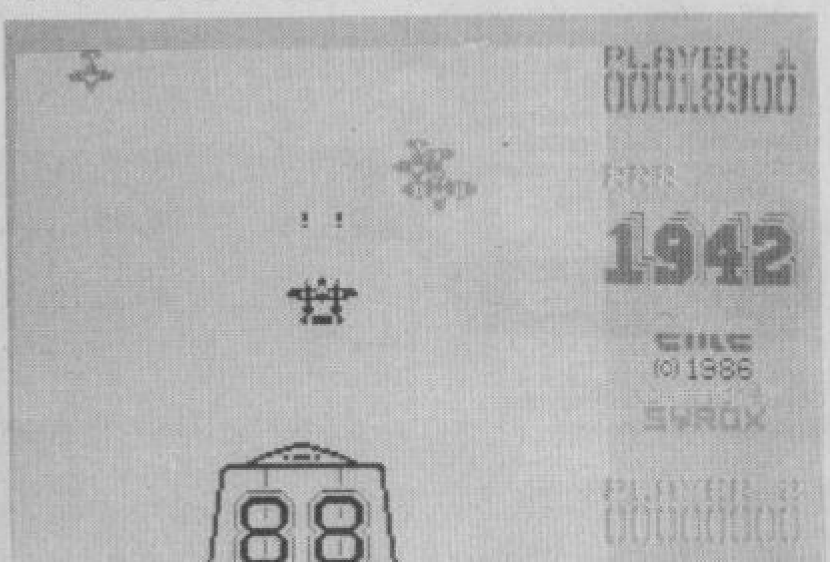
Neaaow Dakka Dakka Boom! Fighting your way through the endless waves of enemy aircraft with a mission to survive and rid the skies of the Bad Guys

CRITICISM

● **" After the brigade of great arcade conversions, I expected a little more from the father company of classics like** Bombjack, **but it seems that they have let their standards slip a little.** Paperboy **maybe wasn't quite as good as it could have been, but** 1942 **is definitely lacking. The graphics aren't amazingly good, but the game is averagely playable and addictive. I probably wouldn't go out and buy** 1942, **because all it is is a fancified shoot 'em up. If you're really amazingly into 'blast the enemy until they are nothing but a clutter of misplaced pixels games,' then there's a fair chance that this game will appeal to you, though it doesn't exactly grab me. But then there wasn't that much to the arcade original in the first place . . . "**

● *" This game didn't really impress me in the arcades, so I wasn't that interested when* 1942 *poked its head around the office door. I'm sorry to say that is seems to have lost a lot of its addictive qualities and playability in the conversion to the Spectrum. The various characters used are not detailed so they look a little on the shoddy side and the use of colour is suspect. The sound is a big disappointment as there are no tunes and only a few effects. Generally, I am a shoot em up fan, but this one doesn't really appeal to me as it simply isn't fun to play. "*

● " This must be one of the worst games to come out of the ELITE offices in yonks. *1942* contains extremely basic graphics and colour that is used very unimaginatively. The sound is not too exciting, and does more to get on your nerves than compliment the game. The presentation of the game is the usual ELITE stuff, consisting of all the options and a nice little high-score table. I can't say that I've seen the arcade game, but if this is all that it contains then I'm not looking forward to it. The game is not very responsive and the collision detection is appalling. I also noticed that planes can often fire at you even if they're in their own explosion. *1942* has none of the addictiveness that all the recent ELITE games contain and they have tarnished their good name with this release. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable directions, 0-4 to Roll
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive enough
Use of colour: lots of colour, resulting in terrible clashes
Graphics: small, but fairly detailed
Sound: lots of clicking sound effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 32 scrolling play areas
General rating: A reasonable conversion of a game that wasn't very good to start with

Use of computer	70%
Graphics	65%
Playability	67%
Getting started	68%
Addictive qualities	61%
Value for money	64%
Overall	63%

Reviews

RUGBY MANAGER

Producer: Artic
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **J Wilson**

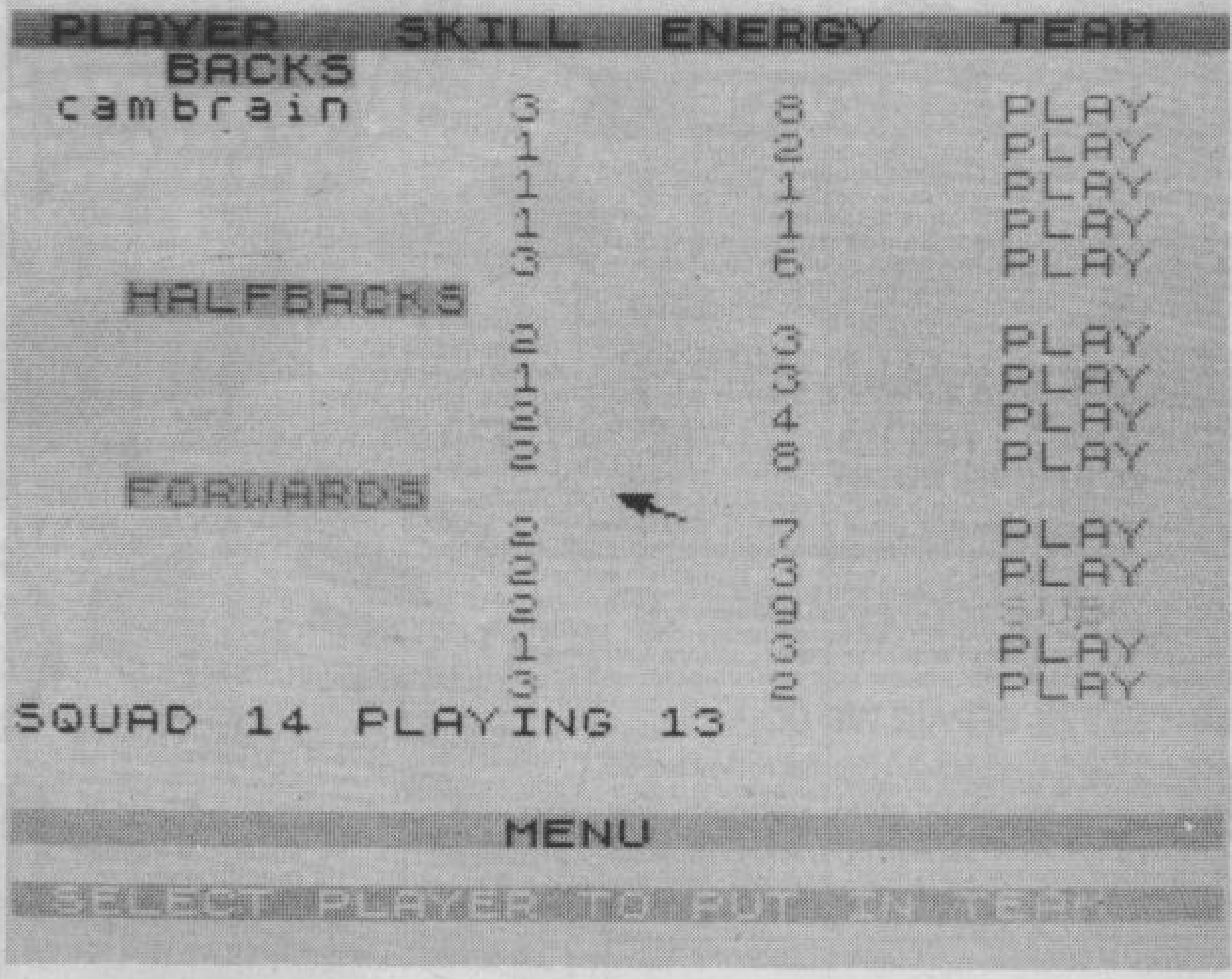
The aim of this game is to win promotion to the first division — no mean feat. There's plenty of competition, so you have to be on your toes. Having chosen a club to manage, a breakdown of your squad is given, with a numerical assessment of the skill and ability of the players.

To start the match, the cursor is moved to the matchstick icon on the main menu and then you simply watch your team perform. At the end, the final score is given, with details of attendance, gate receipts, players' wages, and loan interest. This is followed by match results for the whole division, and the current league table.

By choosing the pound sign icon you can find out about the club's financial situation. Loans can be used to buy a player to build up your squad. The transfer list is brought up by choosing the pen and form icon. This gives details of the player for sale: his skill and energy rating, the sellers, his current value, and whether other clubs are interested. Alternatively, you might want to give a player the old heave-ho, in which case, you choose the boot icon on the menu.

The season is long and hard, and only the most determined manager can hope for promotion. Only you, as rugby manager, can discover if you've got what it takes.







CRITICISM

● **" ARTIC should have stuck with their all-action** International Rugby **(Union) and not tried (forgive the pun!) to go into the Rugby League with a very poor copy of** Football Manager. **The presentation of** Rugby Manager **is very smart — using a cursor for options — but the game itself is very poorly structured. The actual match is badly done, with the same three defenders against one attacker on every attempt. "**

● *" There is nothing in this one that is mildly interesting and I certainly couldn't play it for longer than one game. The graphics are well below average, the characters are small and undetailed, and the use of colour is so bad that you can hardly make out the other team from the pitch. The sound is pitiful — if you are lucky you may hear a beep or two during the course of the match. I didn't feel I was actually participating. "*

● " *Rugby Manager* is nothing more than a joke. The graphics are abysmal, the sound non-existent and the whole game very boring indeed. The cursor is the best bit because icons, strategy, entertainment value and all the usual stuff are just not there. Even at the price, it's awful value for money, and it's not in the least bit addictive. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, O left, P right
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: bad clashes on the match screen
Graphics: unadventurous
Sound: virtually non-existent
Skill levels: one
Screens: six
General rating: Only for avid Rugby fans

Use of computer	34%
Graphics	27%
Playability	26%
Getting started	36%
Addictive qualities	27%
Value for money	37%
Overall	**31%**

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

Producer: Central Solutions
Retail Price: **£0.99**
Author: **Barry Jones**

The show is about to begin . . . but wait! Something terrible has happened. All the stars have been struck down with the dreaded lurgie. There's only one thing to do — you'll have to stand in for them.

Enter the ring as Tightrope Ted. Balanced on a uni-cycle, brave the high wire and its perils. Then, a quick change in the dressing room, and emerge as Sidney the Strong Man. Are you a wimp, or can you manage to pull a 100 ton truck? Succeed at this and assume the guise of Marvo the Mindreader — unscramble an anagram and type in the correct answer.) Enter next as Co-Co, the Knife-Thrower. Try to score over ten points but make sure you don't stab him in the bread basket! Next, risk life and limb by taking the place of Charlie the Human Cannonball. Make sure he lands in the net or there'll be a nasty splat on the sawdust. Yuk!

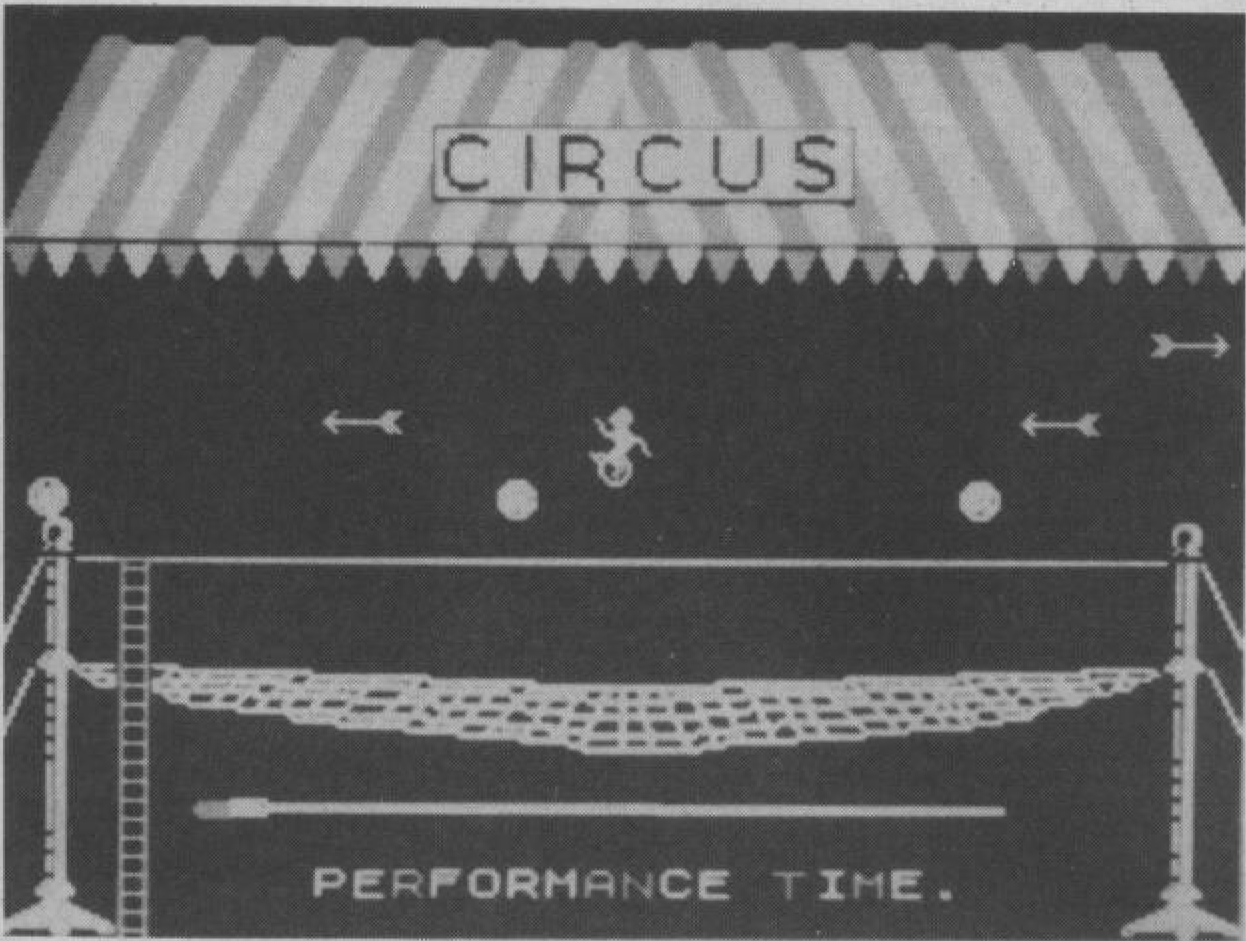
Providing you last this long, all that remains is to dazzle the audience with your final act! Wonder what that can be?

CRITICISM

● **" The keyboard response is good but the things that happen when you press keys are not worth playing for. The different screens are all basically very boring. "**

● *" This game, even for budget software, is below standard. The graphics are sloppy, single character blocks or large unanimated figures. The backgrounds, where there are any, are dull and uninteresting. The sound is poor — only a few spot effects here and there — and it is irritating as well because you can't turn off the screeching effects on the title screen. There is not enough in this to entertain me for more than five minutes. "*

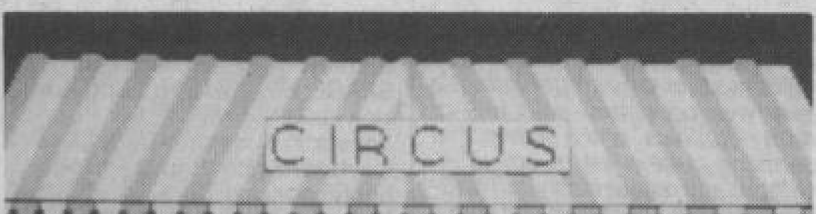
● " Hardly what I would call the *Greatest Show on Earth*, despite the title. The colour schemes are terrible, the characters very basic, and the game generally lacks polish — but the idea is a good one. Although I would much rather have a better, and consequently more expensive game, *TGSOE* is a simply a cheap bit of fun. "



COMMENTS

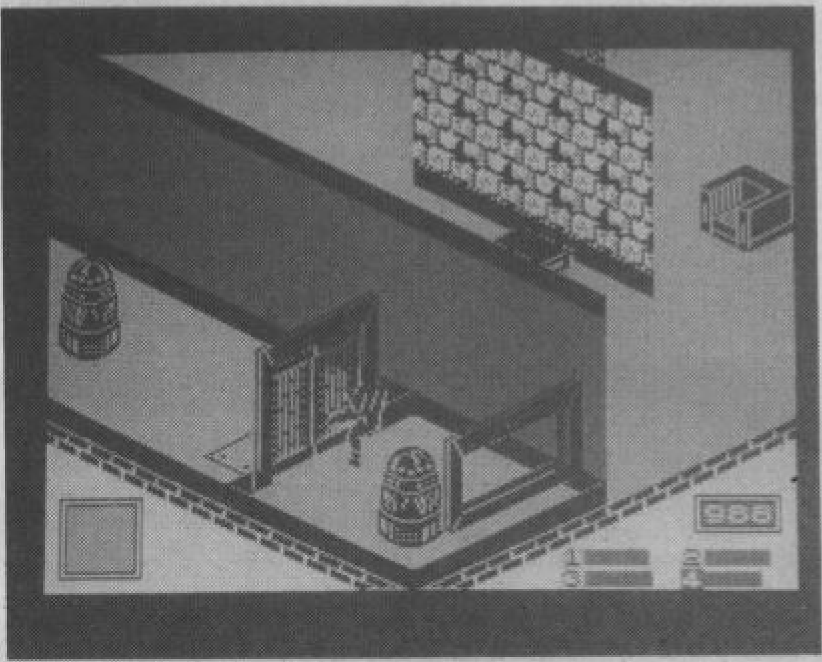
Control keys: varies from screen to screen
Joystick: keyboard only
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: fairly colourful
Graphics: too basic
Sound: not very good at all
Skill levels: one
Screens: six
General rating: An interesting idea but lacks finesse

Use of computer	31%
Graphics	28%
Playability	33%
Getting started	49%
Addictive qualities	32%
Value for money	41%
Overall	**31%**



STRIKE FORCE COBRA

Your commando kicks in a door to get away from that nasty looking dalek creature behind him



Producer: Piranha
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Five Ways Software**

The World is in mortal danger from a evil genius known only as The Enemy. He has hacked in to the world's defence computers and is now threatening to unleash the world's nuclear weapons and destroy everything and everybody unless his demands are met.

The Enemy has kidnapped top computer boffins, and holds them hostage in his four-level headquarters complex. Each of the scientists knows one digit from the secret code which opens the entrance to the fortress's main computer room. If someone was courageous enough to penetrate the complex and destroy the computer, then the The Enemy's plans would be thwarted . . .

The Powers that Be decide to fight back, and a force of top commando fighters is assembled, code named COBRA. Eight commandos are in the team and your first task is to select a quartet to undertake the mission. As the Strike Force enters the fortress the alert is sounded and The Enemy's deadly computer program starts running: the countdown to oblivion has begun! . . .

The aim is to explore each level of the complex, working as a team, and locate the computer scientists held prisoner. Pressing the appropriate number changes the team member under the player's control. Each commando is equipped with a DLB, a digital lock breaker, which can help crack the combination that gives access to the main computer. The more of the code you have in your possession the quicker the DLB can break the combination. At least six digits are needed to give a realistic time scale, and whenever a commando finds a scientist, another digit is collected.

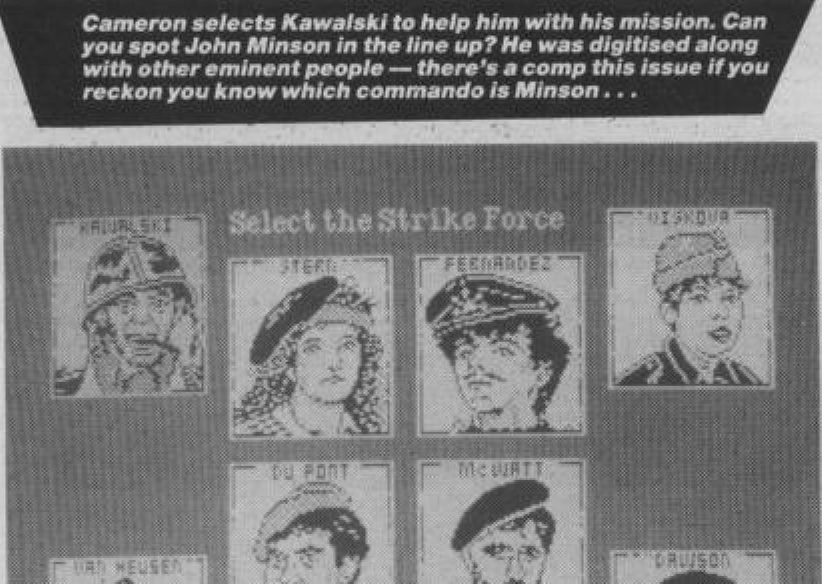
The scenery scrolls in 3D as your agile commandos leap, roll and walk along the corridors. Windows can be leapt through and some doors can be kicked down, while others are operated by switches, like the inter-level lifts. Switches are marked with a D (Doors) and L (lifts) and are often some distance from the door or lift they activate — teamwork is called for.

Guards and droids patrol the corridors and rooms, and need to be avoided or taken out with a quick burst of machine gun fire or the lob of a grenade. Some rooms contain fiendish auto defence systems, such as mobile lasers and electro-blocks, and puzzle-solving skills are needed to get through safely.

Details of the digits already collected and the status of each member of the team are given onscreen together with the number of the commando currently controlled and the time left before oblivion. Extra time can be won by disabling remote computer terminals, and first aid kits can be use to build up the strength of wounded fighters.

Good luck prospective agents, you'll need it!

Cameron selects Kawalski to help him with his mission. Can you spot John Minson in the line up? He was digitised along with other eminent people — there's a comp this issue if you reckon you know which commando is Minson . . .



CRITICISM

● **" It's not often that I play a single game all afternoon, but I just couldn't pull the plug on** Strike Force Cobra. **I found the gameplay very complicated at first, but after a while it all became very clear. Controlling your commandos is a little on the tricky side to start off with but it soon becomes fairly easy. The graphics are detailed although they are not as clear as they could be. The characters are nicely animated and full of detail. The sound is a bit of a disappointment as there are no tunes and only a couple of spot effects. I enjoyed playing this game as it is very original and compelling. "**

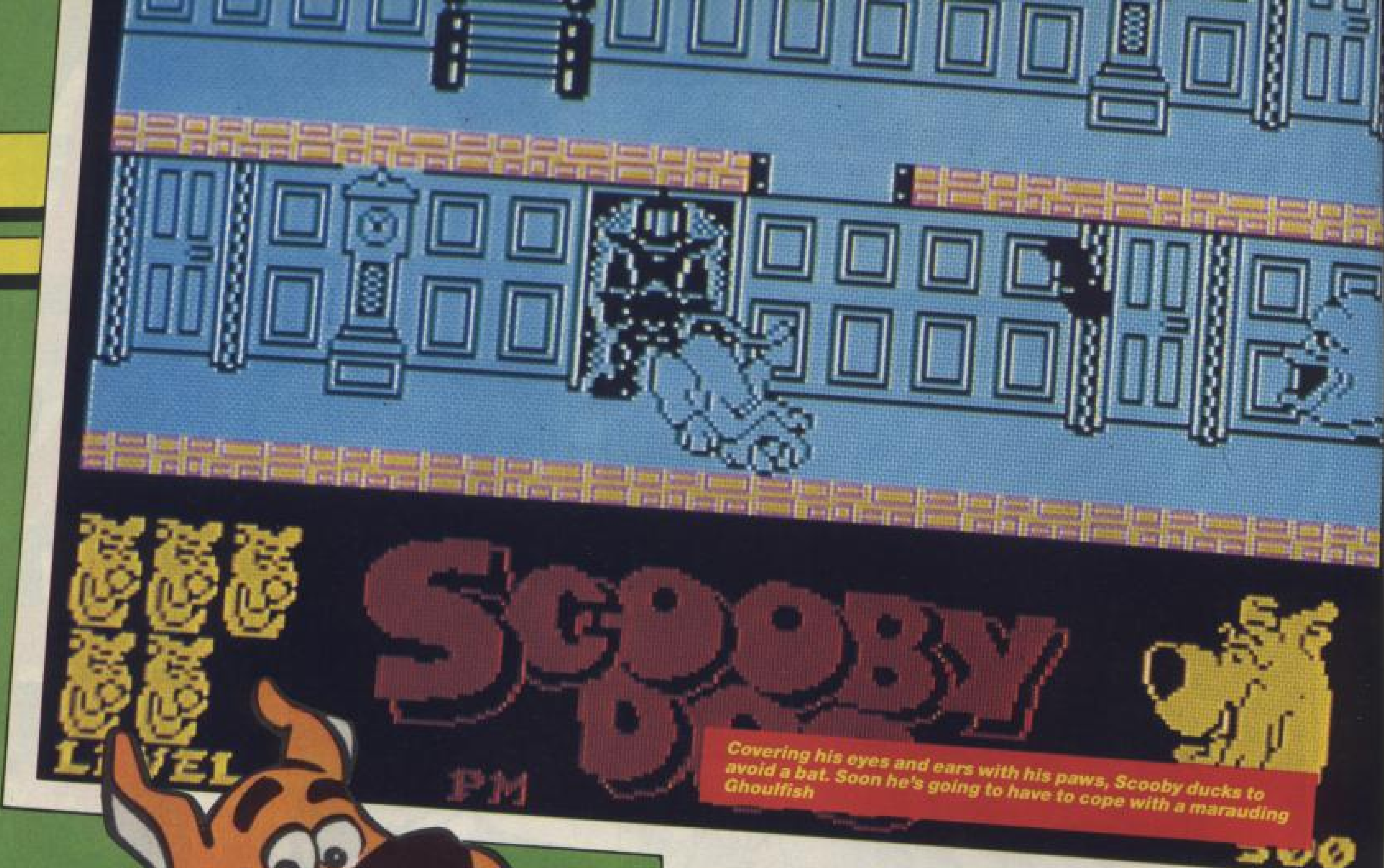
● " Strike Force Cobra *is an extremely complex game that takes a lot of time to get into. It's very well presented with lots of pretty graphics, and a screen that contains quite a lot of colour — without any colour clashes. The 3-D effects are very good and give a feeling of distance and perspective. There are lots of touches that bring the intended atmosphere to life — kicking doors and jumping through windows adds to the flavour of the expedition. I was a bit disappointed to see that the game suffered from locking up on you when there was a bit of activity on the screen, or when it was trying to make a few feeble sound effects — this made the game very awkward to play. I think that* Strike Force Cobra *has a very promising game in it somewhere — but whether you'll get to find it is another matter! "*

● " The very first time I played *Strike Force Cobra*, I didn't rate it all that much, but perseverance has really opened my eyes to a good strategy arcade game. The PIRANHA label is obviously gong to be one to be reckoned with. First, they launch a quality fun game like *Trapdoor*, and then a good strategy shoot-blast-bash 'em up like this. *Strike Force Cobra*, I think, isn't a game that you see in a shop and say 'gorra get a copy of this like soon', but if you buy it, I think it's a pretty likely bet that you'll play it for a good while, and enjoy it. "

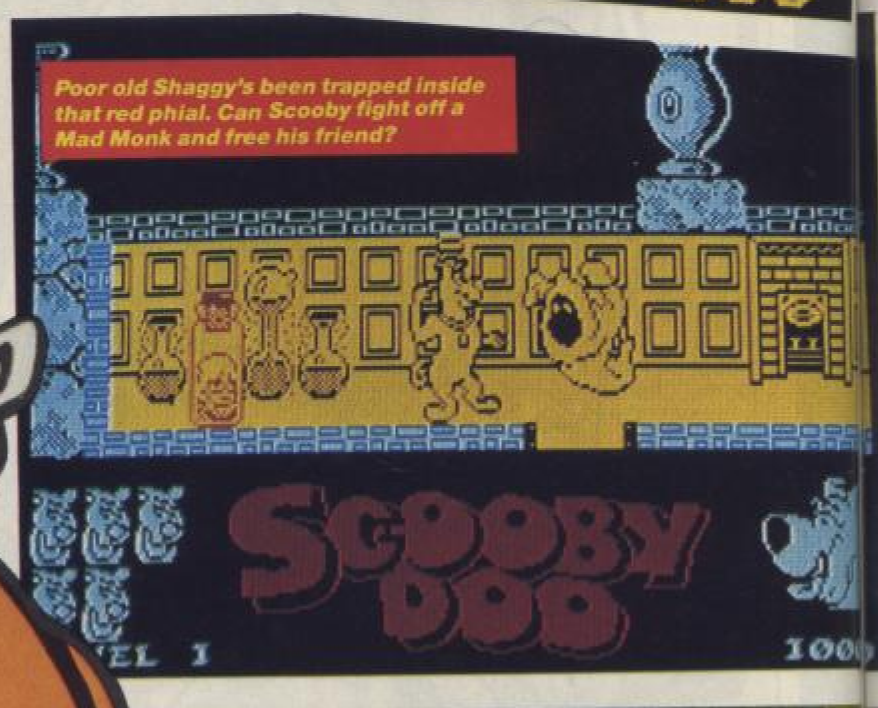
COMMENTS

Control keys: up/left E, R, T; down/right D, F, G; up/right Y, U, I; down/left H, J, K; jump W, O, S, L; dive Q, P, A, ENTER; shoot gun V, B; throw grenade CAPS SHIFT, SPACE; crouch C, N; stand X, M; kick Z, SYM SHIFT
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: needs practice, but responsive
Use of colour: neat
Graphics: good animations, tidy 3D effect
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling play area
General rating: Complicated, and tricky to get into but well worth the effort

Use of computer	84%
Graphics	87%
Playability	81%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	81%
Overall	83%



Covering his eyes and ears with his paws, Scooby ducks to avoid a bat. Soon he's going to have to cope with a marauding Ghoulfish



Poor old Shaggy's been trapped inside that red phial. Can Scooby fight off a Mad Monk and free his friend?





Scooby prepares to bop one of the wibbly wobbly nasties on the second level. . . .

S·C·O·O·B·Y D·O·O

A CRASH Smash

Yikes, Scooby Doo the cowardly pup with the voracious appetite suddenly find himself in a tricky situation. Shaggy, Velma, Daphne, Fred and Scoob are driving along in the beaten up Mystery Mobile when a strange rattling beneath the bonnet forces them to pull over to see what's wrong. ''It's no good,'' said Freddie ''we'll have to get help from somewhere.'' ''What about that big castle over there?'' said Velma pointing to a dark gothic house silhouetted against the moon. ''We could knock at the door and ask them if there's a garage or something nearby.'' she continued. ''Yeah, that's fine, like Scooby and I will er wait in the van in case someone tries to uhh, steal it, right Scoob?'' said Shaggy, looking distinctly nervous. ''No, all four of us will go and Scooby can stay behind in the van,'' said Velma. And the four of them started walking towards the dark forbidding looking castle, leaving Scooby sleeping in the back of the Mystery Mobile.

Little do they know but the castle on the hill is owned by a mad professor who likes nothing more than to lure victims back to his deserted lab and chop them up into little pieces and store them in specimen jars for future experiments. Double yikes!

And surprise, surprise that's exactly what happens to Shaggy, Velma, Daphne and Fred. That dastardly professor ensnares the gang in his evil plan and leaves them, apparently trapped forever in his draughty, lonely castle.

And they'd still be there now if it wasn't for that canine coward Scooby Doo behaving in most uncharacteristic manner and trying to release his pals from their predicament. Perhaps it was hunger that drove Scooby from the beaten up van, or maybe the eerie way the wind moaned around the roof. Whatever it was, Scooby decided to see what was going on inside the castle . . .

However, when Scooby enters the professor's castle he has a shock in store for him. The castle seems to be haunted by all manner of nasty spooks and ghosties. He's about to run back to the van for all he's worth when he spots a Scooby Snack on the ground and realises that his friends must be in mortal danger.

There are four levels to the game and concealed on each level is one member of the gang trapped inside a specimen jar. Scooby has to locate his chums and release them.

However, Scooby Doo encounters a strange array of beasties on each of the levels and they are all determined to stop him from releasing his friends. And of course these nasties are all controlled by the evil professor himself.

On the first floor of the castle — which contains Velma — Scooby encounters horrible floating ghoulies which jump out from behind closed doors and are very menacing to the poor pooch. Hooded figures sidle up to him silently and try and knock him off his paws. The only way which Scooby can defend himself against the nasty inhabitants of this castle is by using his cumbersome paws which come in very handy for bopping the spectres on the bounce. Scooby can only hit his victims if he's not moving, and if they get him first he faints with fear and loses one of his six lives. When all these lives have been lost Scooby joins his friends as a future experiment for the professor. Evil cackle. However, Scooby can reclaim a lost life by picking up a Scooby Snack on the ground and eating it.

Level two of the castle is full of springy, sproingy things. These bounce out of cupboards and dumb waiters and sneak up on the dynamic doggy from behind. Skulls litter the floor and must be bounced over and floors are separated by ladders which must be climbed. But be careful . . . the nasties have a habit of scooting down the stairs and knocking poor Scoob for six. Level three hosts some very wicked looking monsters. Ghoulfish float around exercising their huge elastic jaws. The ghosties from the first level make a re-appearance, and tatty bats screech around at head height causing Scooby to bend down and cover his eyes with fright!

The final level is guarded by bulbous monks with no faces. Flying dumbells and rolling bowling balls are just some of the hazards which Scooby has to negotiate in the quest to release the last of his chums.

At the beginning of each level Scooby gains an extra life, but lives lost in the previous level are not given back to him . . . For once, this hungry dog gets the chance to play the hero.

Producer: Elite
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Gargoyle Games**



CRITICISM

" First time I saw this on the Amstrad, I thought that it was an extremely playable game. The Spectrum version is equally so, if not more. The scrolling isn't super smooth, and the lack of tune is a little disturbing, but the graphics are excellently animated, and the game plays superbly. Addiction is almost certainly to be found, and the game represents very good value for money. Even though its been ages in the making, and the finished version is completely different from the screen shots seen all those long months ago, Scooby Doo **is a really cool arcade game, well worth getting. "**

CRITICISM

" This is obviously not the game promised by ELITE sometime last year, but it was definitely worth the wait as it is tremendously playable and ever so compelling. The graphics really are first-class: the many large and well defined characters move around the castle admirably and the castle itself is very pretty. Sound wise this game rates fairly highly as there are many excellent spot effects during the game — sadly there isn't a tune on the title screen but the front end is so good that a tune isn't really necessary. I strongly recommend this game as it is addictive and great fun to play too. "

CRITICISM

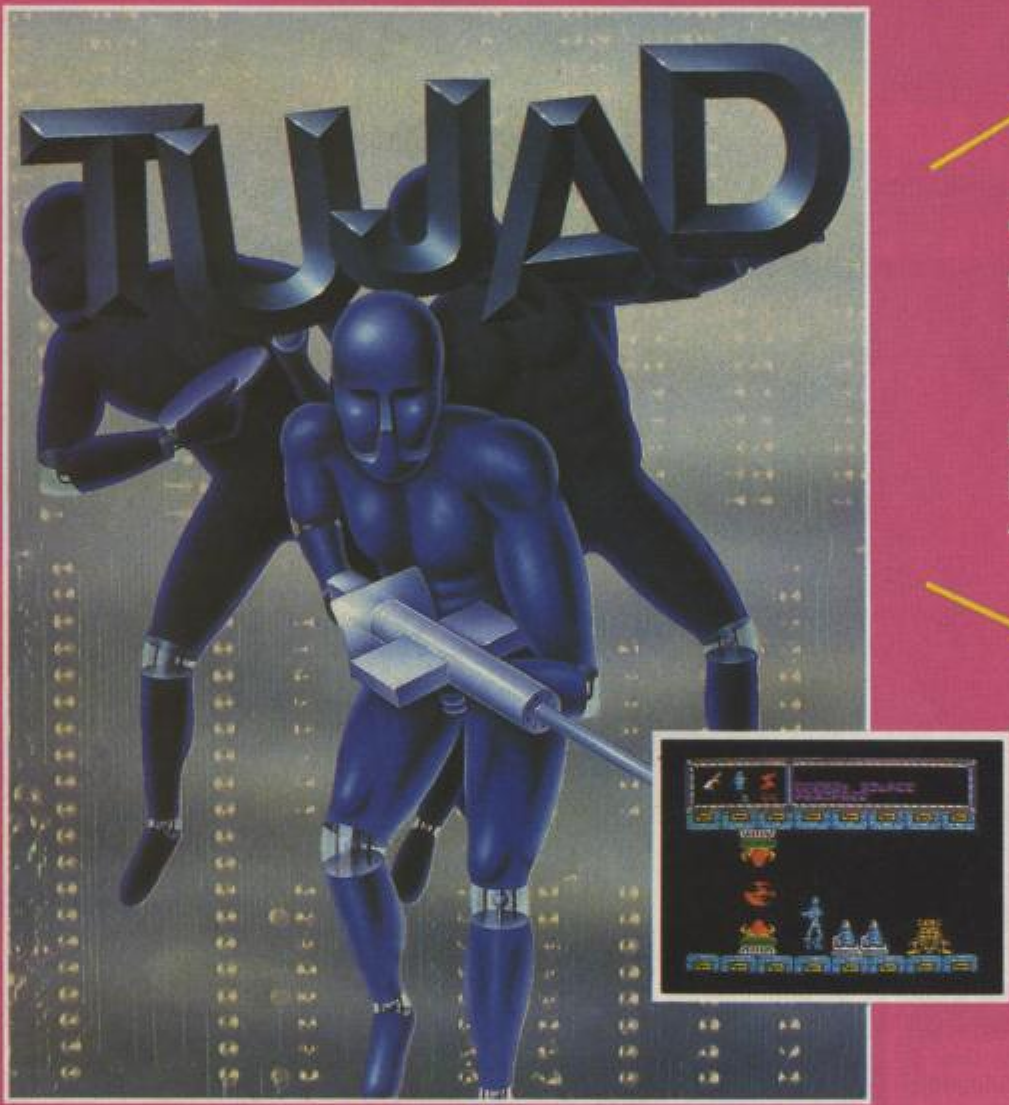
" After the long wait for Scooby Doo **it would take something fairly special to justify the time spent on it. This game manages to impress after the first couple of goes but it doesn't contain anything to keep the brain cells electrified for long. I found** Scooby Doo **looked very attractive to the eye and the idea of biffing and boffing all the characters — which didn't look too much like ghosts — proved quite exciting for a while, but this required no real skill. The animation of all the graphics is very smooth and accurate, and the screen scrolling is very silky (!?!). Scooby sound is not very startling and has very little tunewise. The game bases itself on the TV series superbly with all the folks from the team in it. Unfortunately I didn't find it extremely enthralling . . . but it's certainly playable. Have a look before you buy. "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: left, right, up/jump, down/duck, fire/punch — redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: mainly monochrome
Graphics: excellent
Sound: neat effects; no title tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: four scrolling levels
General rating: Yet another highly playable game released by ELITE

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	93%
Playability	92%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	91%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**91%**

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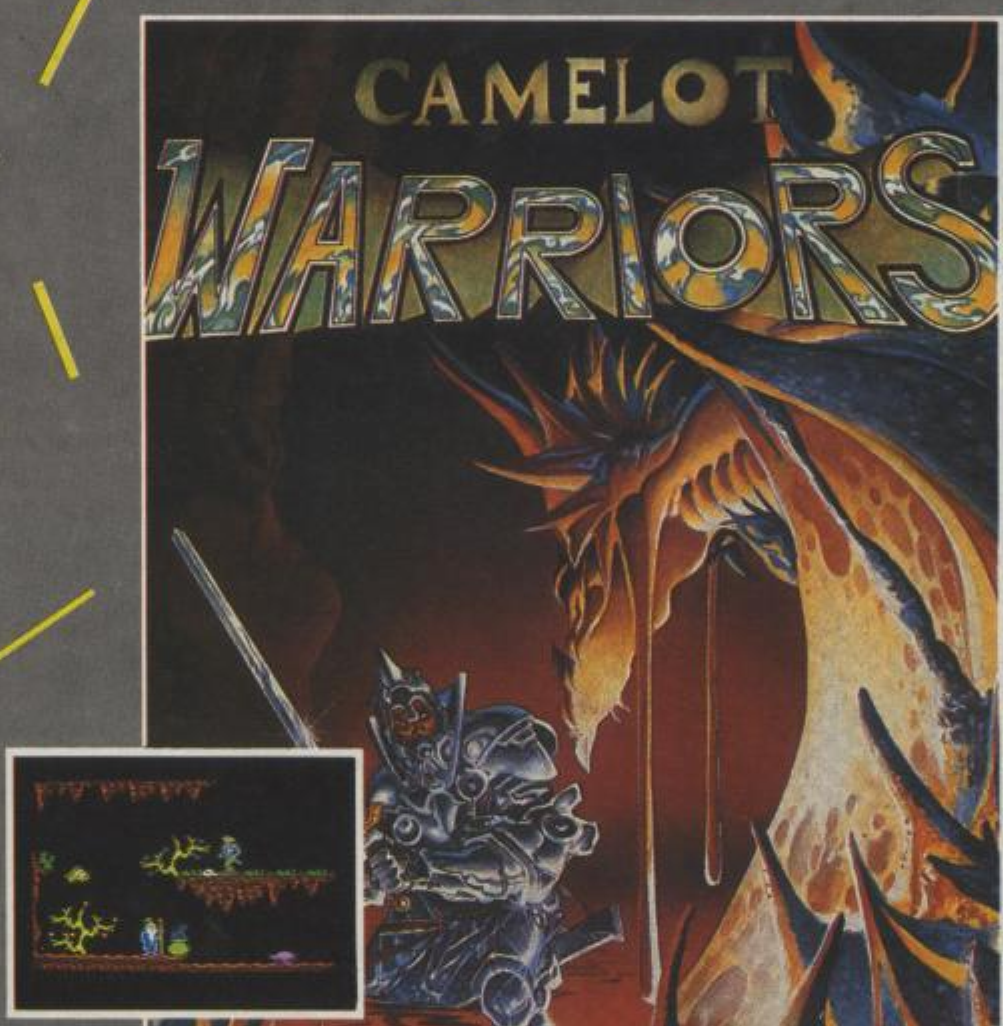


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NEXOR

Producer: Design Design
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Graham Stafford, with graphics by David Fish**

Ahhhrr, once again Earth is being threatened by nasties from outer space. This time however the situation is far from timid.

The interstellar battle between Andromedan forces and good ol' Mother Earth has reached its climax. For years the war has raged throughout the universe in between aeons of stalemate. Earth's commanders have decided to put an end to the conflict once and for all by attacking the crucial Andromedan lifeline, the Hyperspace route between Andromeda and Orion. Because it provides them with essential supplies without which they would be unable to continue the war, annihilation of this route would be disastrous for the Andromedans. A shrewd move on Earth's part you must admit. However, in order to accomplish this daring attack Earth has had to devise a totally new sort of Super Weapon code named **Nexor** after the planet which was used to house its development. It is very secret indeed.

After many feasibility studies and an awful lot of planning Nexor eventually reaches committee stage. A date is set and all the Nexor Big Cheese staff potter down to Earth for a long and boring conference over lots of cups of tea. Nexor however, left in the hands of the minion workers, becomes a prime target for a counter attack by the Andromedans (not so secret after all). The dastardly enemy launch a huge attack on the unguarded planet, hell bent on seizing the Nexor plans. The attack results in carnage, and all the workers bar one are killed. This sole survivor of the Andromedan attack realises there is only one thing left to do. He must somehow locate the ten modules (scattered around the Nexor complex for reasons of security) that make up the Super Weapon and transport them down the Matter Transference beam to the nearest Earth space ship along with the all important blueprints.

This is problem enough, what with the complex gradually being invaded by Andromedan combat droids. But the sole survivor has another problem. The Matter Transference Beam has been damaged during the fighting and must be fixed before anything can be beamed to safety. Naturally there is a limited amount of time to achieve this before the Andromedans take over.

At the game's start you are blessed with eight lives but contact with the invaders' equipment or the invading droids themselves results in one of these being lost, so courage must be complemented with skill. The Nexor complex is made up of hundreds of separate rooms, each of which is an individual puzzle in itself. As the game progresses these rooms gradually become filled with Andromedan droids determined to prevent completion of your mission.

Apart from increasing numbers of Andromedans, the rooms are populated with an assortment of nasties which must be avoided. Some exits are inaccessible unless objects are used to reach them. Chairs and blocks can be picked up and dropped at



strategic points to reach higher places. Conveyor belts take you right into the path of danger and seemingly harmless objects suddenly zapp you right out of existence. Inanimate blocks spontaneously sprout legs and scuttle off in pursuit of something far removed from what you have in mind and try and flatten you into the bargain. Whether they're Maggie Thatcher look-alikes or the more conventionally shaped droids, the nasties are all equally dangerous.

If a game is prematurely aborted a status report shows you how much has been completed and how many essential pieces of equipment you have managed to find.

The quest takes place in a vast three dimensional maze flanked with steep walls leading to more levels. These can be reached by way of rather unorthodox lifts which disguise themselves as bubbles or blocks. By jumping onto a lift it's possible to reach new parts of the maze, thus getting you a bit nearer to safeguarding the Nexor secret for ever and certainly keeping it out of the clutches of those inscrutable Andromedans.

Stomping through a rather dangerous part of the complex — row upon row of bombs lurk, each one just waiting to be touched and detonate



CRITICISM

● **" Good stuff!. If you're into Filmation games, then** Nexor **will appeal to you in a big way, I think. The graphics are very good indeed, but some parts of the game behave rather unrealistically, such as when your bloke falls way down through fifteen screens and, on impact, walks off with no damage whatsoever. Despite this unfortunate aspect, the game isn't bad at all, and unlike the Amstrad version, it is perfectly possible to die. In places,** Nexor **is very like** Batman, **though the latter is superior, due to a greater degree of playability. That said,** Nexor **has its fair share of both playability and addictivity. Worth a look, if you're not yet bored by the mega millions of 3D games that have already appeared on the Spectrum. "**

● *" It's all very well saying that 3D games are great, but after the amount that I've played I must admit that if it isn't the best 3D game so far then I'll easily get very bored with it. Nexor has all the potential to be one of the great 3D games but is let down by the fact that it is very unplayable — and as a result becomes boring after a few games. The problems that have to be encountered are easy to solve once you get to the room containing them. The only difficulty I found in the game was the actual trudging around the maze of rooms. The graphics are definitely the best element of the game — very well drawn and animated. As 3D games go it's well implemented, but unfortunately I couldn't find anything different enough to make it stand out. "*

● " I was slightly shocked when I loaded this one up and saw that it was in boring old Filmation. Have DESIGN DESIGN gone soft . . . are these the same people that brought us such fast and furious games as *Dark Star* and *Rommel's Revenge*? After playing it for a while I was not surprised to find that it played in a similar way to all the other Filmation games — there is a nice feature though, some times you can walk from one room to another without a door. The graphics are up to usual Filmation standards, excellent, very large and well detailed and the Nexor complex has nice wall paper too! The sound is minimal with no tune and only a few inaudible sound effects. Generally if you like this sort of game then I recommend it to you, however if like me, you are bored to tears with *Knight Lore* look/play-alikes then stay well clear of it as there is very little here that is new or interesting. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: pleasantly responsive
Use of colour: the same ol' monochromatic Filmation masking
Graphics: very good 3D, as usual in this sort of game
Sound: like most DESIGN DESIGN games, minimal
Skill levels: one
Screens: 128
General rating: If you're not yet bored of Filmation games, then check this one out

Use of computer	83%
Graphics	91%
Playability	77%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**81%**

TOP 30 FOR OCTOBER

Last month saw Elite's COMMANDO go AWOL from the number one position, but with guns blazing it returns this month to its former foxhole at number one. With GHOSTS AND GOBLINS taking second in command with BOMBJACK in third place this means that Elite takes the hat-trick for the top three games this month. Still climbing this month is BOBBY BEARING from The Edge as it moves another eight places to the number twelve slot. Gremlin Graphics' JACK THE NIPPER crawls another three places to take seventh position. New entries this month are one — with SPLIT PERSONALITIES from Domark showing its face in the 26th position.

John C Harris of Leicester wins forty reasons to be cheerful as the first name out of the Hotline draw bag this issue. Aunt Aggie will put £40 worth of software into an extra special jiffybag sealed with a loving Aggie kiss (yeuch!) and send them off to you post haste. Four runners up will each have to share her attentions — they will receive their CRASH Hats and T Shirts, lovingly ironed, folded and stuffed into their travelling jiffies. ''Lucky old you''s are therefore due to: Andrew Matthews of London; Chris Pugh of jolly old Cambridge; Scott Fletcher from cutlery city, Sheffield and Simon Parker who lives in Surrey.

The HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games — it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms that live on the Results pages and make your voice heard. Well, make your writing readable — there's no longer a phoneline voting service.

If you don't want to carve up your copy of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy out the details from the voting forms onto a nice clean sheet of paper and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your opinion, there's always the chance of winning a rather interesting prize. Once the information has been taken from the forms we receive during the course of the month, ten voting slips are drawn out for special consideration by Auntie Aggie — five from the Adventure Ballot Box and five from the Hotline Ballot Box.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T Shirt is awarded to the first slip out of the draw from the Hotline votes, and another £40 worth of goodies and a Shirt goes to the Hotline Draw winner.

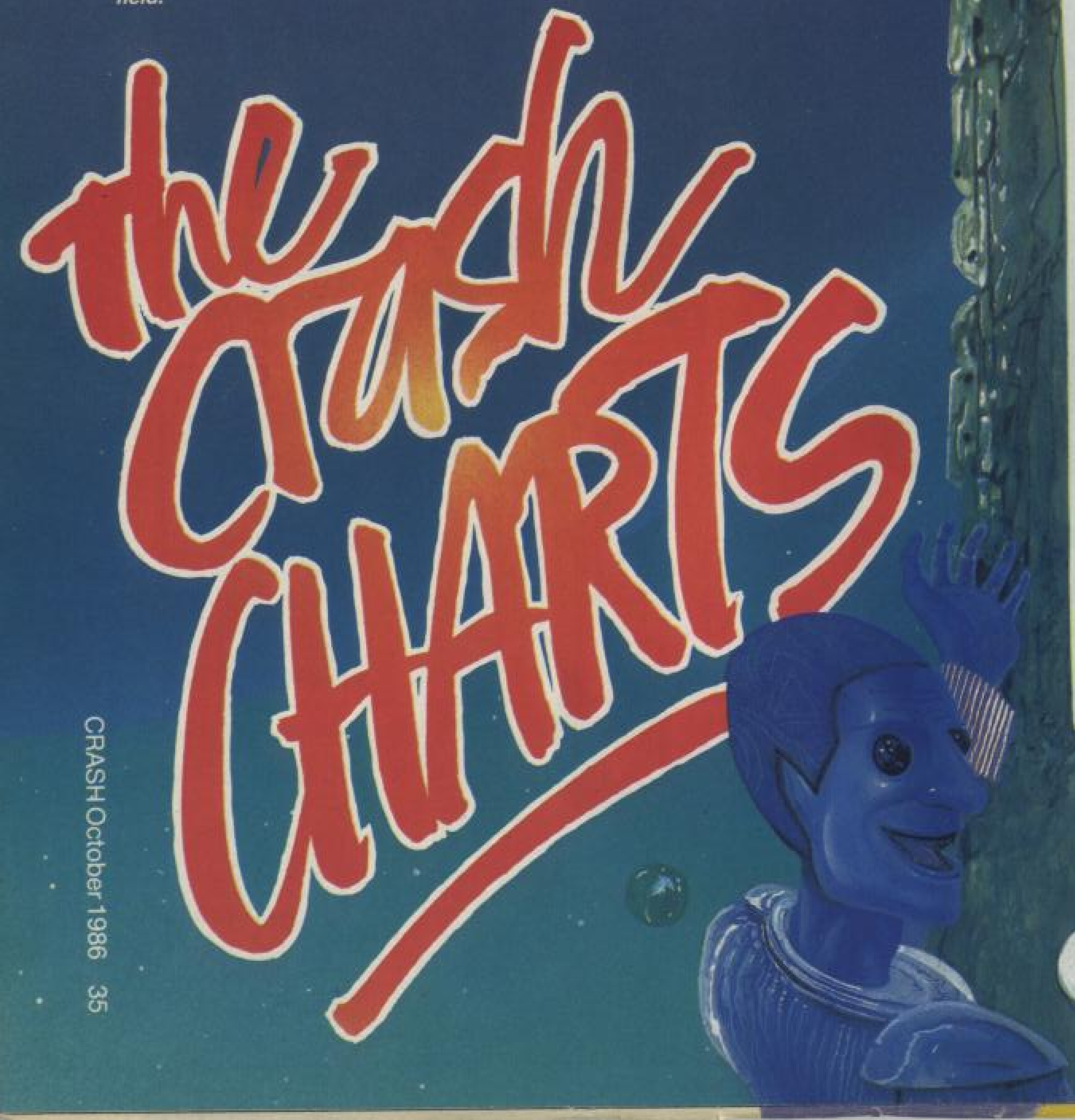
Four runners up from each ballot collect a CRASH T Shirt and a CRASH Hat, so get those votes in to the CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

Hotline Top 30

1	*(4)*	COMMANDO	ELITE
2	*(3)*	GHOSTS AND GOBLINS	ELITE
3	*(5)*	BOMBJACK	ELITE
4	*(1)*	QUAZATRON	HEWSON
5	*(7)*	ELITE	FIREBIRD
6	*(2)*	BATMAN	OCEAN
7	*(10)*	JACK THE NIPPER	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
8	*(9)*	GREEN BERET	IMAGINE
9	*(6)*	MATCHDAY	OCEAN
10	*(23)*	SPINDIZZY	ELECTRIC DREAMS
11	*(27)*	TURBO ESPRIT	DURELL
12	*(20)*	BOBBY BEARING	THE EDGE
13	*(15)*	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE GAMES
14	*(18)*	KNIGHT TYME	MASTERTRONIC
15	*(11)*	SPELLBOUND	MASTERTRONIC
16	*(12)*	PING PONG	IMAGINE
17	*(8)*	MOVIE	IMAGINE
18	*(21)*	EXPLODING FIST	MELBOURNE HOUSE
19	*(25)*	WAY OF THE TIGER	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
20	*(—)*	SABOTEUR	DURELL
21	*(19)*	PENTAGRAM	ULTIMATE
22	*(13)*	STARSTRIKE II	REALTIME SOFTWARE
23	*(30)*	HYPERSPORTS	IMAGINE
24	*(28)*	BACK TO SKOOL	MICROSPHERE
25	*(17)*	STARQUAKE	BUBBLE BUS
26	*(—)*	SPLIT PERSONALITIES	DOMARK
27	*(14)*	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
28	*(26)*	BOUNDER	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
29	*(—)*	ROBIN O' THE WOOD	ODIN
30	*(—)*	DALEY'S SUPERTEST	OCEAN

Biggest clamber this month is executed by by oldie but goldie, SHADOWFIRE from Beyond, while the highest new entry slot is filled neatly by superhero extraordinaire, REDHAWK, from Melbourne House. THE VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE published by CRL but written by those wacky and zany gels from St Brides makes its first showing at number 25. Meanwhile at the top of the chart, HEAVY ON THE MAGICK and Gargoyle Games continue to dominate, while LORD OF THE RINGS and SPELLBOUND argue about second and third places. Ocean's FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD vacates the number 17 slot and goes into limbo, outside the chart — the highest level exit.

They're well into trains down Didcot way in Oxfordshire — that's where Hewson's launched SOUTHERN BELLE, and coincidentally, is where David Payne lives. David should be able to amaze his chums with the monster prize package that should soon be on the way to him as winner of this month's Adventure Chart Draw. The four runners up are: Martin John Page of Lowestoft in Suffolk; Paul Buttery of Exmouth in Devon; Chris Geggus, an Essex lad from Romford and Ralf Rashbrook from Hatfield.



Adventure Top 30

1 *(1)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
2 *(3)*	**LORD OF THE RINGS**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
3 *(2)*	**SPELLBOUND**	MASTERTRONIC
4 *(7)*	**THE HOBBIT**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
5 *(11)*	**DOOMDARK'S REVENGE**	BEYOND
6 *(4)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
7 *(25)*	**SHADOWFIRE**	BEYOND
8 *(9)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	MASTERTRONIC
9 *(5)*	**FAIRLIGHT**	THE EDGE
10 *(8)*	**PRICE OF MAGIK**	LEVEL 9
11 *(10)*	**FOURTH PROTOCOL**	CENTURY/HUTCHINSON
12 *(14)*	**MARSPORT**	GARGOYLE GAMES
13 *(13)*	**SWORDS AND SORCERY**	PSS
14 *(12)*	**BORED OF THE RINGS**	SILVERSOFT
15 *(—)*	**REDHAWK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
16 *(16)*	**GREMLINS**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
17 *(6)*	**RED MOON**	LEVEL 9
18 *(15)*	**DUN DARACH**	GARGOYLE GAMES
19 *(—)*	**VALHALLA**	LEGEND
20 *(—)*	**THE BOGGIT**	CRL
21 *(24)*	**SEABASE DELTA**	FIREBIRD
22 *(26)*	**MINDSHADOW**	ACTIVISION
23 *(—)*	**ENIGMA FORCE**	BEYOND
24 *(19)*	**DRAGONTORC**	HEWSONS
25 *(—)*	**THE VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE**	CRL
26 *(30)*	**TIR NA NOG**	GARGOYLE GAMES
27 *(28)*	**SHERLOCK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
28 *(18)*	**SPIDERMAN**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
29 *(22)*	**EMERALD ISLE**	LEVEL 9
30 *(—)*	**OUT OF THE SHADOWS**	MIZAR



KNIGHT GAMES 2

Producer: Black Knight Software
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Quantum Productions**

An interesting approach to budget software, this one — it's a compilation of three games: *Protector, Syrinx II* and *Moonraker*.

Protector is a *Defender*-style shoot em up which re-employs many features familiar to *Defender* fans, including a scanner, smart bombs and dematerialising capability. The aliens swoop down from the skies trying to pick up energy cells. Once captured, the cell is carried by the alien to the top of the screen where it regenerates the meanie into a higher life form that suddenly develops a powerful urge to locate your exact position and blast you out of the skies.

The green doobries pounce down on the harmless energy cells and drag them kicking and screaming into orbit to produce the more sophisticated red droids. The yellow blocks lay mines which cause dreadful problems later on unless they're well and truly blasted. Maximum points are scored for killing the magenta aliens. If these are hit they explode, releasing lots of smaller aliens. Cyan oblongs locate the shuttle with pin point accuracy and one touch spells destruction.

The second game, *Syrinx II*, is full of dangers. Before you can extricate yourself from an unpleasant situation, fifteen keys have to be found. These are scattered around the maze-like tomb of Syrinx and take a bit of hunting out. The place is filled with lots of horrible monsters who guard the keys, and make life difficult.

You start your mission with 99% energy. Colliding with monsters loses energy. You have, however, been provided with a nifty laser, although indiscriminate use is unwise since it also uses up energy, and the game ends when energy is at zero. Collecting a key replenishes energy.

The last game in the trio comes complete with a separate program of instructions . . . A survey indicates that a moon at the edge of the galaxy contains rich mineral deposits. Rival mining corporations despatch teams of mining and fighting equipment to plunder this mysterious and wealthy place.

When the rival corporations arrive on the moon, the mystery deepens. For the moon is inhabited by machines and not humans. A desperate battle begins between the rival groups and the natives of the moon.

The two-player game is played on a grid with each player controlling one of the rival mining corporations. Mines must be captured and the rival corporation prevented from capturing other mines by blowing up opponents' Moonraker shuttles or taking over mines already used by the locals. And the robotic natives are understandably miffed at having to share their lucrative moon with a bunch of power crazed mining corporations

Three different games, each with a different style of play and action, all rolled into one budget package — bit like the old days, really. . . .

CRITICISM

● **" This tape certainly offers great value for money; two playable arcade games and a strategy game for a quid each. None of the games are excellent, but they are all good fun for a couple of hours or so. The graphics on the whole are about average. The first game is a very playable** Defender **clone with small and undetailed characters, but they scroll nicely all the same; nice spot effects too. The second is a fairly unoriginal 'fetch the keys' arcade adventure that plays quite slowly. The screen scrolls in quarters so it can be quite hard on the eyes. Characters are small and they move about badly. The third doesn't really appeal to me, as it is very complicated. On the whole I recommend this package as it will probably entertain you for as long as an expensive game, without costing so much. "**

● " Protector, *though looking like a game from the dawn of Spectrum time, is amazingly addictive, but I suppose that the credit for that ought really to go to the original authors of* Defender. *That said,* Protector *is a fair, if not brilliant clone.* Syrinx II *isn't particularly stunning, but the last,* Moonraker, *though not graphically anything new or eye opening, has certainly a great deal of scope for play, especially for non-arcade freaks. Overall, for the price,* Knight Games II *represents quite good value for money, but if you buy expecting to get three supremely well programmed, professional, polished games, you're going to be disappointed. "*

● " Three games for two pounds — can't be that bad, I thought. *Protector* is a not very accurate translation of the arcade game, but plays superbly and extremely fast on the higher levels. This game alone is worth the asking price. Unfortunately it's let down by a couple of games that are much below the standard. *Syrinx II* is a very boring arcade adventure aggravated by quarter screen scrolling. *Moonraker* is a very complicated and time consuming affair consisting of very small, unimaginative characters. It may be three for the price of one — but to my mind, only one of the games is worth it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: vary from game to game
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fairly responsive
Use of colour: attractive
Graphics: good on the first game and acceptable on the other two
Sound: spot effects on all games
Skill levels: 26 on the first game: one for each of the others
Screens: scrolling on *Protector*
General rating: interesting and appealing combination

Use of computer	59%
Graphics	50%
Playability	62%
Getting started	52%
Addictive qualities	70%
Value for money	73%
Overall	**66%**

Can you escape from the nasty dungeons by collecting keys, zapping and avoiding monsters and keeping energy levels topped up? SYRINX II from Black Knight



MOONLIGHT MADNESS

Producer: Bubble Bus
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **John Cain**

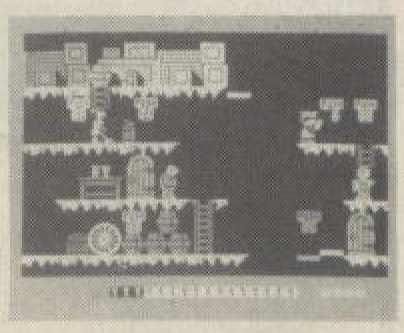
Another game from the author of mega-selling *Booty*! The story is set in a strange house owned by a mad professor who invents weird and wonderful gadgets. His home is full of them, and some are very sinister indeed as our hero finds out when he unsuspectingly pays a visit during Bob a Job week.

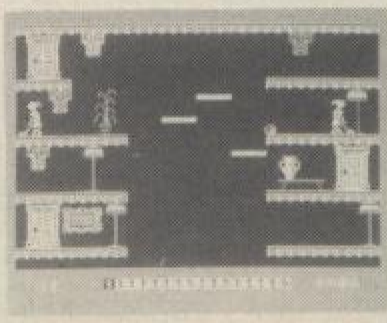
The hapless Boy Scout trots up the garden path full of good intentions and rings the rusty bell. An old man wearing huge horn-rimmed spectacles answers the door. Just as the lad is explaining that he's come to do some good turns, the old man suddenly slumps to the ground whispering, "My pills, my pills . . . "

It's a race against time to find the pills which are locked away in a safe. First, sixteen keys have to be found . . . and there's a time limit: if you take too long then the Prof might not pull through.

Secret inventions hidden in the house are possessively guarded by bits of machinery, and the servants who help with the upkeep of the house don't limit themselves to doing the housework and a bit of gardening. The old man's minions are highly trained individuals who have been instructed to attack anyone who enters the house. With all this to contend with, the little Scout is going to have quite a hard time locating the keys and combination . . .

Each room in the house is filled with strange creatures and gadgets which are set on removing the young infiltrator from the premises. Three lives are supplied. Contact with the odd-ball staff is





generally fatal, and jumping too far down onto lower platforms also spells death. To get around this irritating problem, the Scout must master the use of mobile platforms controlled by bellpushes. By pressing the appropriate button, a platform can be moved into place to bridge an all important gap or summon a moving platform to your rescue.

Secret passages link screens, but where they lead is a surprise in itself. Predictably, the keys and important items in the game are all carefully guarded by the scientist's minions who have no idea that you are actually trying to help their master.

CRITICISM

● **"I was expecting** Moonlight Madness **to be a fast all-action arcade adventure/come shoot'em up, but on loading it turned out to be a slightly disappointing** *Booty* **sequel. After the usual initial struggle to master the controls and learn the 'physics' of the game, it became quite fun to play and even addictive to a certain extent. The graphics are large and colourful but there is a lot of character clash which does get on your nerves after a while. The sound is fairly well done: there are some nice effects and a tune plays continuously. Not a bad game, overall, but nothing remarkable. "**

● *"Booty was a real classic in its day, being easily the best cheapie of its time. Hasn't* **John Cain** *come down in the world!* Moonlight Madness *isn't anything like as good. The title screen plays a nice tune, and has got some pretty animation, but there were some pretty bad bits in the game. The main character moves at an amazingly varied pace, as if there's a force ten gale blowing to the left. When any attempt is made to move right, all the moving characters on the screen slow right down, and the man really has to slog it out against this powerful 'wind'. As far as drab, boring, unattractive, uninteresting, overpriced platform games go,* Moonlight Madness *is pretty good. By normal standards, though, its dire. "*

● "BUBBLE BUS have been reknowned for their great arcade/adventures, so when I saw that they had teamed up with the author of *Booty*, I was really looking forward to seeing what they had come up with — the end result is extremely disappointing. The presentation of *Moonlight Madness* is well up to scratch; great inlay story and picture, and a good loading and title screen — but the game leaves a bit to be desired. BUBBLE BUS seem to have put this game in the wrong range, *Moonlight Madness* should be in the **Minibus** range — it has all the makings of an average budget game. The graphics are none too exciting, consisting of colourful but flickery characters. The games drawing point is the sound, and there are a few good tunes — one continuous throughout the game — and neat spot effects. To my mind, *Moonlight Madness* is an over-priced little game that could be beaten by many a budget title. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: slow and unresponsive
Use of colour: lots of colour resulting in lots of colour clash
Graphics: small and uninteresting
Sound: little tunette plays throughout, good spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 43
General rating: a sequel to *Booty* which doesn't seem to have progressed from the first game by John Cain

Use of computer	56%
Graphics	61%
Playability	55%
Getting started	64%
Addictive qualities	57%
Value for money	55%
Overall	56%

ZYTHUM

Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **David O'Conner**

Into the mystical lands you must venture in search of the secret potion of Zythum. This is a very ancient type of beer which gives the partaker mystical powers and possibly even eternal life. It has been lost for centuries in this weird and wonderful landscape and many have searched for it before you, but it has never been found. One of the main reasons for this is that the country in which it is hidden is inhabited by various guardians who possessively guard the elixir.

Four separate landscapes have to be crossed during the journey to the potion location. Three lives are available, and a life is lost each time you make contact with one of the guardians that pursue you mercilessly on the journey — you return to the start of the current land when death comes . . .

Setting out with a burning desire to locate the Zythum you are equipped with a fist full of fire crackers and a limited number of bombs. Firecrackers seem to go on forever, but use the bombs sparingly because once they're gone there ain't no more. A magic staff that wards off evil spirits is amongst the useful objects that can be collected on the way: a chalice confers the power of levitation and a crucifix gives short term immunity from the custodians. Money bags and treasure chests are worth bonus points.

There's no time to hang about and enjoy the scenery, however, as each of the four levels must be completed in just eight minutes. Take any longer and it's back to square one. Apart from the custodians and guardians this country contains many natural dangers. Quicksands suck a hapless traveller to a sticky death while bottomless pits must be skillfully jumped over or else — wheee! Dead. Marsh mud sticks to your feet and temporarily saps jumping abilities, while spring pools send you cavorting into the air. Hidden landmines, buried in a sneaky attempt to get rid of unwanted travellers also have to be avoided. The vegetation is also a bit weird because some bushes make you invincible for a short while.

The action takes place in a scrolling window in the top half of the screen. An arrow points to your position on a map along the base of the the screen, below the status area. It'd better be a good brew, this Zythum — you'll need a good drink on arrival!

CRITICISM

● **"At first,** Zythum **held a reasonable appeal for me. After playing for a length of time, though, things started to get crazily frustrating. The game seems to have been written so as to make it as unaddictive as is possible. If that was the author's objective, then he's certainly succeeded. The graphics are pleasant enough, but you really start wanting to belt the life out of your Spectrum when it kills you off pixels before the end of a stage and sends you right back to the beginning, time and again. The idea for** Zythum **isn't the best ever conceived — but is definitely not the worst — though after playing the game you might need some convincing of that. Quite good in all its facets except addictivity. This isn't a game I would recommend. "**

● *"I found that* Zythum *was well presented but lacked a very challenging or addictive game. The graphics are very detailed but the colour is completely wrong. The blue on white screen is very hard to see and strains the eyes. I felt that you had to be good at the game to really enjoy it, because the distance you have to cover to get anywhere in Zythum is quite large.* The graphics are the most impressive part of the game, as they are large and recognisable but could have had some better animation to bring them alive. The game didn't consist of much to keep me playing for long — it was just a case of judging distances and shooting baddies. Zythum *is a very basic 'up and down' game that requires little mental ability and is very easy to leave. "*

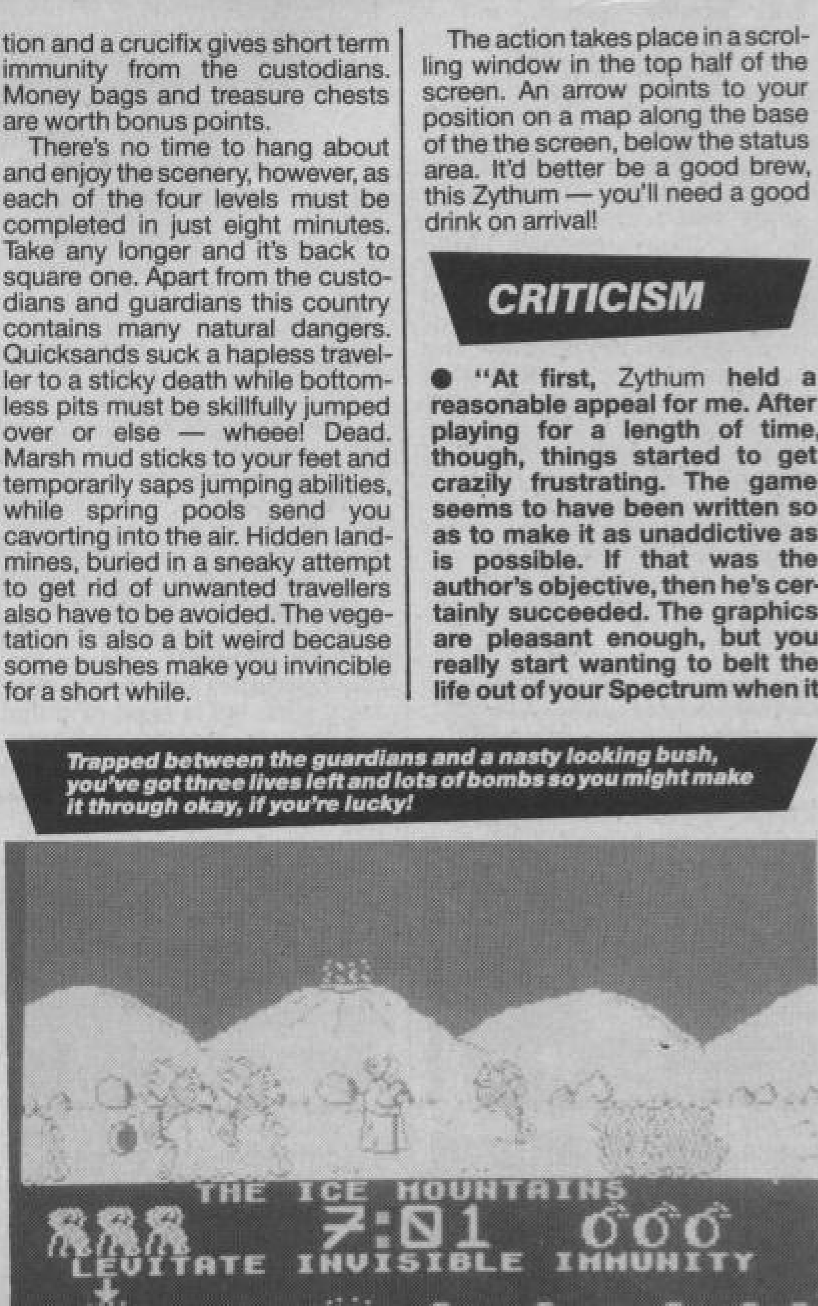
● "Oh no. Oh no! I can't play this game any more; its just sooooooo frustrating, its unbelievable! A split second of misjudgement, and it's back to the beginning again. Okay, so some games are equally as demanding in their necessity for accuracy, but they don't penalise mistakes quite as harshly as *Zythum* does. The fact that it's so maddening is quite a pity, considering the game has got so much potential for playability. Graphics are passable, and the scrolling is a bit unfortunate, but visually in every other respect, *Zythum* has no serious downfalls. Playing the game soon makes you realise that not everything that looks okay plays well. Such a pity, after the excellent *Dynamite Dan II*. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: mainly monochrome
Graphics: large and wiry
Sound: minimal effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling play area
General rating: Zythum is a game which you may find appealing at first, but is frustrating when played to any great length

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	68%
Playability	66%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	52%
Value for money	53%
Overall	59%

Trapped between the guardians and a nasty looking bush, you've got three lives left and lots of bombs so you might make it through okay, if you're lucky!



MIRRORSOFT

ZYTHUM

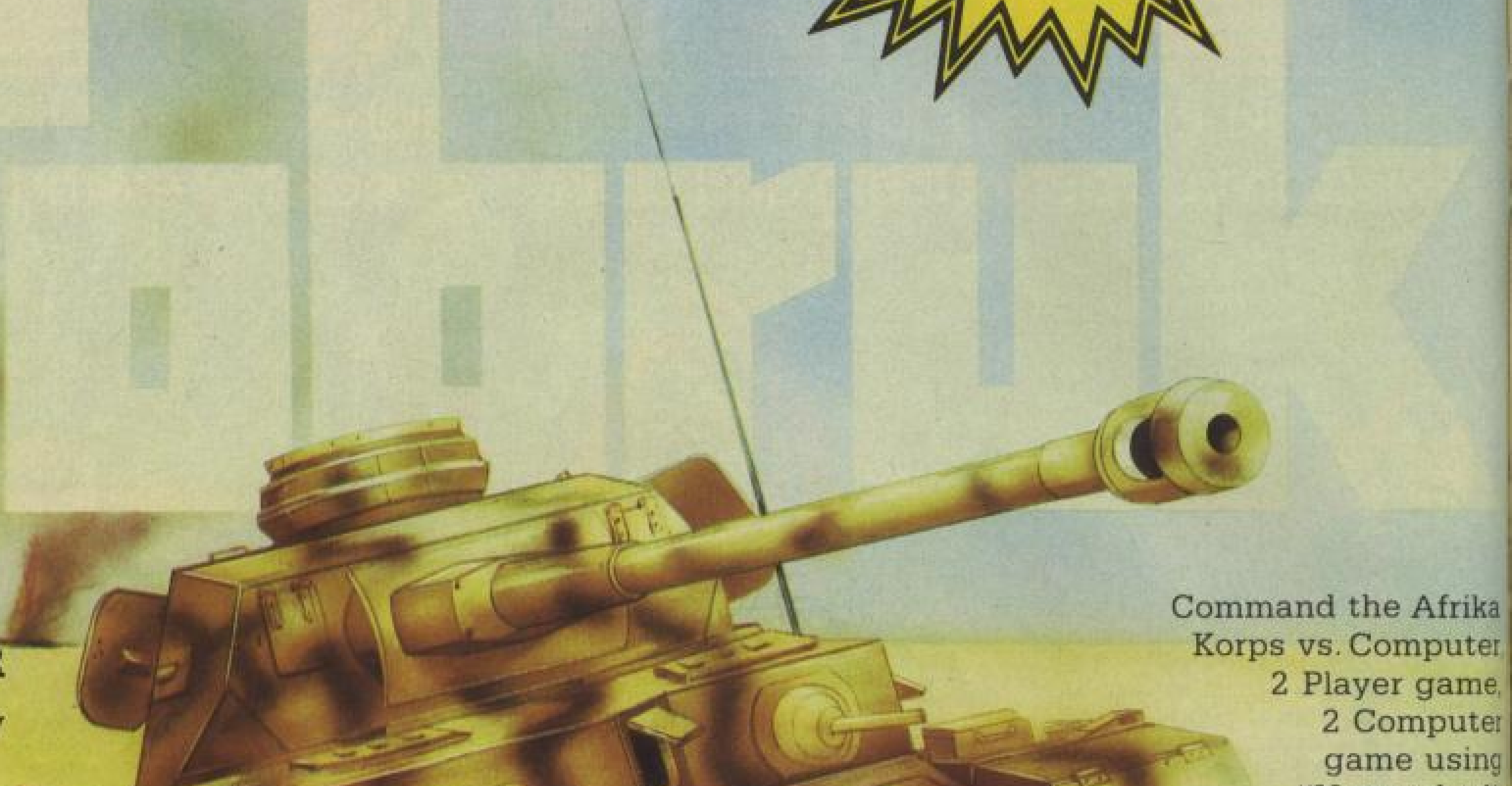
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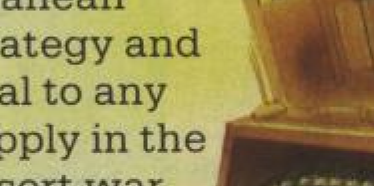
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MAIN MAP



TANK DRIVING



TANK ATTACK



TOWN ATTACK



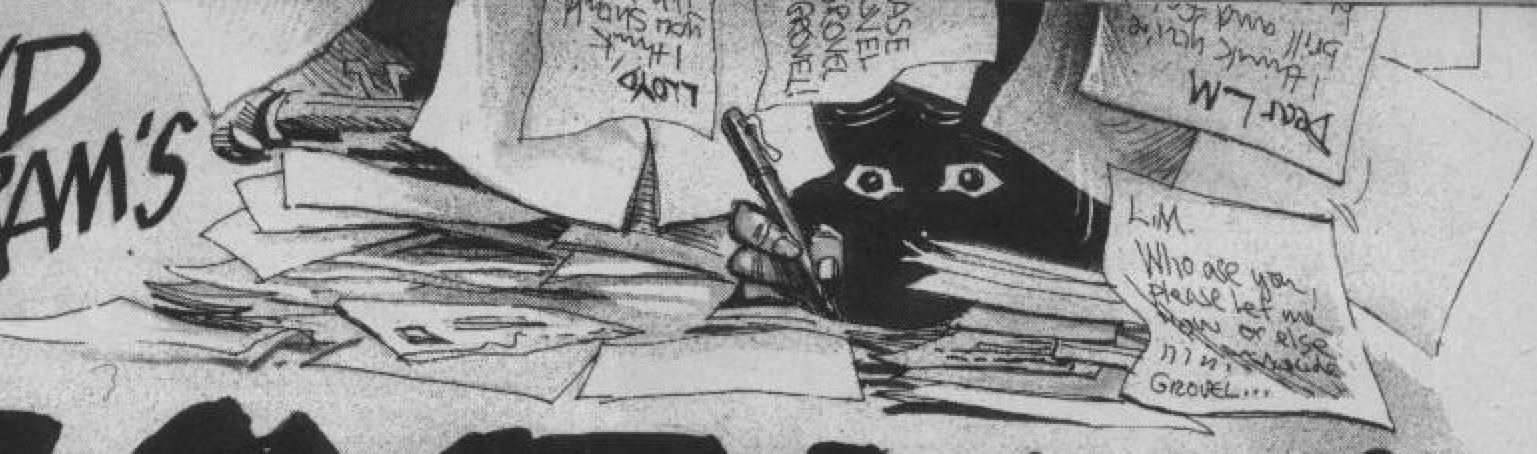
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FORUM

With everyone returning weary but triumphant from this year's PCW Show (I've been stuck here holding the fort in their absence as I cannot bear crowded places), I find myself with a bulging mail bag and some very good letters. The triumph I mention refers to the highly successful sticker campaign where repeated commando-style raids on the EMAP stand at the show made it clear that Hannah Smith and not Melissa Ravenflame is the only REAL Girlie Tipster. Despite the repeated gauntlet throwing, the much vaunted C&VG girlie tipster failed to put in an appearance, leaving our very own Hannah in command of the field at the end of the day. I'm told that it was C&VG who started things by plastering the Newsfield stand with offensive stickers on the Wednesday and Thursday which threatened to throw mud in Hannah's eyes. Typical underhanded tactics I say!

However, onto the real business of the day — your letters, and this one below gets the £20 worth of software for letter of the Month . . .

STAR LETTER ☆ ☆ IN PRAISE OF THE GURU

Dear Lloyd,
In reply to John Pinkney's letter (ish 31) I must point out that the Forum would not be, without the so-called 'manners'. OK, so most letters in the Forum are moaning ones, but when most people are happy and contented, they don't usually make a song and dance about it, do they? But when something upsets them, or someone says that a thing they enjoy is bad or wrong (no smutty innuendo intended), then most people feel they should moan about it. I should know, it's for this reason that I'm writing this letter! Also, does the aforementioned (LMLWD) personage realise that he is contradicting himself by moaning about moaning?

And in reply to Mr P (brain) Schofield, what is wrong with women in CRASH? Where would CRASH be without the subscriber teachings of 'GURU' Denise Roberts, the packaging expertise of 'Auntie Aggie' Carol Kinsey or the educational reviews of 'Brains' Rosetta Mcleod? And, I think many readers would agree (including Helen and Sara Beckett, Lisette Menage, Liz Soames, Sarah Grace and Becca Davies of Somerset) that Hannah 'Eat your heart out Melissa' Smith is in fact BETTER than Robin 'Roger Kean Follower' Candy.

So Lloyd, keep up the moaning letters.
Simon 'moan moan' Salwan, Horndean, Hampshire

What! Me contradict myself!? I'm the epitome (look that one up) of logical thinking, reasoned argument and sensible debate. I'm also a jolly nice guy, which is why I'm giving you the £20 worth of software this month for your splendid defence of all things feminine.
LM

ARE THEY JOKING!!

Dear Lloyd,
I am hoping that you print this letter in full with no bits edited as if you don't it will mark a sad episode in the life of CRASH and you don't seem to want to publish any controversial letters (which are often more interesting).

I have just been reading *Sinclair User* when, I came across a letter which critises your magazine a great deal. After reading it I felt I must immediately write to you and put the record straight . . .

This letter (in the September 1986 issue) makes many ridiculous points. First it says *Sinclair User* is more readable and amusing than CRASH which, it most certainly isn't as all *Sinclair User*'s 'Jokes' are just foolish and immature unlike some of yours which are actually funny.

It proceeds to say that *Sinclair User* is more colourful and interesting but, I must complain and state that CRASH has as much colour as *Sinclair User* and is definitely more interesting with it, also lasting a longer time to read and re-read (also, having 20 or 30 more pages) while, *Sinclair User* just gets thrown away.

This letter carries on . . . Now it says that *Sinclair User*'s reviews are better than yours but, as any sane person must realise yours are a lot better, more descriptive of the game in question, more detailed and longer though you could improve this by showing the reviewers' initials by the review.

There's more yet! Apparently, our letters are written by people with IQs less than 75 (not me nor most of our other readers), all printed by teenage boys (I don't think so!) never say anything worthwhile (somebody's got this wrong! *Sinclair User*'s are all stupid and include rubbish by the so called leader of the Humanitarian Democratic Communist Party! That says a lot!) CRASH letters are supposed to be unwitty and come across as **** (ha ha).

There's more!! Our clear contents page and excellently drawn covers (most of them are good) are meant to be unclear and less readable and informative that theirs which is rubbish as *Sinclair User* covers could be drawn up by a blind man in five minutes and the contents page is one hell of a mess.

Also, it comments, *Sinclair User* covers every aspect of computing, but this is stupid as most of the magazine is adverts and Playing Tips which ramble on and have ancient pokes which look like they're nicked out of back issues of CRASH. I bet I could send an August CRASH poke and get it published in about November's *Sinclair User*. One nameless person even sent the same map off to both magazines.

CRASH is better than *Sinclair User* in these ways: Better maps (not inch high ones), letters, covers, reviews, contents, decent adventure (even though my classic game wasn't reviewed), Tech Tips that work, more colour, Lunar Jetman, readability, length, value and Playing Tips.

By the way, good luck to your LM magazine which I shall buy and to Hannah Smith in her battle with inferior *C&VG* Tipsters.

This girl letter-writer to *Sinclair User* (her name I am tempted to print), is the worst traitor since Mark Roberts of Ealing all those years ago. She says *Sinclair User* is better value as it is 2p cheaper. Now let's see . . .

At that rate you'd buy a new game in just over 41 years NOT counting inflation! She also claims to read CRASH so, I hope she sees this and realises her many mistakes, if I was her I'd go back and crawl in a hovel.

Finally, try and print my letter and not just chuck it in the bin as, it contains brilliant valid points and my name's never been in CRASH.
Michael Sutton (loyal CRASH fanatic), Malpas, Cheshire

Wow, that's some analysis Michael. I'm afraid I must confess to hardly ever reading S U, so I haven't seen this particular letter. I'll bet S U doesn't have nice grannies writing in like we do — 12 year-olds indeed. Well some no doubt are, but don't forget the average reader age is actually 17.5. The next writer also has a few similar points to make . . .
LM

CHEAT POKES

Dear Lloyd,
Recently while reading *Sinclair User*, I noticed that some of the pokes and cheat routines which appear in CRASH also appear in *Sinclair User*, usually a month or two after they appeared in CRASH. A recent example of this is the *Green Beret* listing for infinite lives which appeared in the June issue of CRASH programmed by Brian Smyth, the same listing turned up in the *Sinclair User* August issue with very slight changes (line numbers changed, prompt messages changed etc) and *S U* claimed that Barry George and Mark Bell had written it. Also in the same issue of *S U* appeared a listing for *Bombjack* which had also been copied straight from CRASH. They have also copied the colour, double page reviews which CRASH are famous for. *Sinclair User* is not the only magazine which copies both style and cheat listings, other offenders are *Your Sinclair* and *Computer and Video Games*, but to a lesser extent. Keep up the good work and keep CRASH the number one magazine in the entire world. One word of warning, keep CRASH original and keep the humour.
Thomas Connolly, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford

I've no doubt the mags you mention could sometimes claim the opposite. There are some readers who take great delight in lifting the listings from one magazine and writing in to another very quickly as though it was their own cheat routine. As magazines we have very little way of checking up on this sort of thing until it's far too late. Just another example of how we suffer for our art . . . !
LM



SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Dear Forum,
After the Seven Deadly sins of Adventure, here are my Seven Magnificent Deadly Sins of Arcade Writing.

COST
Mermaid Madness, Kung Fu master, The Comet Game and, believe it or not, *World Cup Carnival* are all overpriced by a huge amount. In at least three of these the sound is bad, the graphics worse, and the colour clash wore still. The latter, *World Cup Carnival*, fooled a lot of people, and whoever I meet says it is even worse that the reviews people have given it.

BUDGET
I can't say all budget games are crap, because they aren't. But some software houses think that they can launch rubbish games at low prices. *Ninja Master, The Master* and *Cagara* and *Con-quest* are below average to say the least. And three pounds is not all that cheap, although most games in this league are good, *Cagara* is exceedingly crappy crap.

CLONES
Knight Lore, Alien 8, Pentagram, Batman, Sweevo's, Spindizzy, B Bearing etc, *W.O.T.E.F., Yie ar Kung Fu, International Karate* and *Sai Combat, Gunfright, Pyracurse* and *Nightshade*. It goes on and on. Can't the software houses realise that we want originality? *Jet Set Willy*, the game that launched a thousand copies. Most of them poor imitations. *Shadowfire* was the first game with icons to speak of. All of a sudden up pops all these games with icons. What had been revolutionary soon became run of the mill.

PACKAGING
Why do all games seem to have double cassette boxes around them? I have only seen two games which need two cassettes, *The Planets* and *Way of the Tiger*. Ultimate and Ocean are the main culprits. Also, huge packaging that falls apart as soon as you open it. That means Beyond!

EARLY ADVERTISING
Remember *Hunchback the Adventure, Street Hawk* and *Knight Rider*? Gosh, doesn't it seem like a long time since adverts first appeared for them. About a year ago, if you must know. Actually, a version of *Street Hawk* came out, but was withdrawn before anybody could part cash for it. Other held-up adverts were the *Prince* and *Swords and Sorcery*.

PROTECTION
Why are so many games protected? Not everyone in this world is a pirate. Lenslok is a pain up the butt and I once needed to re-load *Elite* three times. *JSW11* colour codes are a deterrent, but it only took me one night and six pens to copy them out, while my friend used a colour photocopier. The number codes on *Dragontorc* were photocopied successfully first try.

ENDINGS
This is only a minor complaint, but why do so many games have crap endings? *Batman*, most Ultimate games, *Starstrike 11* and others all have endings along the classic lines of 'Congratualtions, you have completed this game'. Can't houses leave some space in memory for an animated ending, or something interesting?

Those are my seven deadly sins. Hope you agree with them.

Andrew, Isle of Lewis, Scotland

That seems like a fairly concise list of sins, Andrew. Anyone else share these feelings? Ah yes, there is . . .

BRING BACK CANDY

Dear Lloyd,
I wish Candy would return from his new pastures and come back to his old job, because I hate Hannah Smith. The thought of a woman taking over a man's job embarrasses us readers as we think that CRASH is such a brilliant magazine, but the thing that bugs me is that us (fabulous) readers never get to see many photos of you or anyone else who writes for CRASH.

If you make any stupid remarks about this letter I'll personally Kill You.

Daniel Kydd, Spixworthy, Norwich

Hannah's very keen to get her hands on your full address, Daniel! After several bouts with Melissa Ravenflame, she could take you on with both hands tied behind her back. Man's job indeed! Robin Candy still pops into the offices after college some afternoons, but he's taking a long sabbatical (LMLWD) from CRASHing. (Incidentally, he thinks Hannah's doing a great job).
LM

MCP SCANDAL

Dear Lloyd,
What has happened to dear CRASH? I am talking about that very disgusting letter YOU PRINTED (gasp) by Mr P Schofield saying that women are only here to clear up after men. We're not machines you know, we do have a mind of our own.

I wear jewellery, make-up and do other feminine things but have never picked up a pair of knitting needles in my life. Mr P is living in the 19th century: and if he thinks women would like to clean up after his disgusting self he's got a shock coming. Has he ever noticed the squillions of women authors around? Judging by his letter he isn't too intellectual himself. He is also very boring as well as a very disgusting male chauvinist pig.

Clair Ritchie, Dalkieth, Midlothian

I couldn't agree with you more, Clair, but you mustn't be angry with me for printing his letter. After all, it's got your dander up enough to write and refute his chauvinist nonsense!
LM

CRASH COMPARISON

Dear Lloyd,
First of all I have a confession to make, I actually buy computer magazines other than CRASH. Now before you screw this letter up and throw it in the bin please read on.

I have been buying CRASH and *Sinclair User* for over two years now, and from time to time I have also purchased other mags such as *Computer & Video Games* and *Your Sinclair*. What has compelled me to write to you is a letter that I read in *Sinclair User* concerning its new look. It states that *Sinclair User* is becoming more colourful and interesting to read and is overtaking CRASH in these respects. Whilst I accept that the magazine has improved vastly over the past few months, I find the statement that *Sinclair User* is actually better than CRASH very hard to digest.

The 'New Look' that so many magazines have adopted of late — ie much more colour, bigger reviews, playing tips, greater emphasis on games reviews than hardware reviews — is not new at all. I have seen it in CRASH magazine for years now.

It seems very ironic that mags which used to boast that they were not just comics, and treat themselves very seriously have now adopted the 'CRASH Look'. It would appear that these mags have at last realised that although the humble Spectrum can be used for many serious applications, the principal use of the computer is in games playing.

Keep up the good work CRASH, and although I will continue to buy other computer mags yours is still the best.

Andrew Thorpe, Sheffield, S Yorks

Thank you for the kind comments, Andrew. It has been interesting for us up here in the wilds of Shropshire to watch other publications follow CRASH's lead. I'm not trying to suggest that we are all brilliantly clever or anything (cos we're not really), all we did at the outset was look at the market and realise no-one was taking games as seriously as they deserved.
LM

AND NOW 5 SINS . . .

Dear Lloyd,
After reading A Neithan's letter on the seven deadly sins of adventures, I'm writing about the 5 deadly sins of Arcade games.

AIMLESSNESS
When a game has no aim it loses some of its adictiveness because there is no ultimate aim. It either loops round to the start or carries on at the same difficulty. Some examples are:- Fist, Spy Hunter, Bombjack and *Yie ar Kung Fu*. Many say that some games couldn't be aimful, but I would disagree even shoot em ups can be made aimful eg, *Starstrike, Glass, Moon Cresta*. But maybe not *Space Invaders*. When you set out to complete a game rather than just get a big score it has you coming back to it see the end effect adding to the games excitement.

OVER DIFFICULT
A game must obviously not be made too easy, but should be completable by an average game player with plenty of practice. Many good games could only be completed by game playing wizards eg, *MOVIE, Knightlore, Alien 8, Spindizzy, Starstrike 2, Pyracurse* and *Dynamite Dan*. Okay you could always cheat, but it's not the same when you have to cheat. When a game is over-difficult people tend to let it fall by the wayside because they know it is out of their reach which is a shame if the game is a good one. The game doesn't have to be slowed down or made inferior, to make it easier you could give the player more lives, or make the nasties less nasty.

TOO SMALL
This occurs more with arcade adventures than anything. Generally, if the game is too small it's too easy, eg *Jack the Nipper, 3 Weeks in Paradise, Herbert's Dummy Run*. With these games it's just a case of experimenting with objects and looking for significant links. I bought *3 Weeks* and completed it in two days without help, hints or pokes. My mate did it in one and half hours. The cream of the arcade adventures are the massive ones, eg *Dragontorc, Marsport, Dun Darach, Fairlight*.

LACK OF ACTION
A good arcade game should have you using your reflexes most of the time and your brain some of the time. A big mistake of software houses is to put in lots of insignificant screens which are empty and actionless, eg *Gift from the Gods, Robin O the Wood, Enigma Force*, these are but a few culprits. Insignificant screens are a waste of memory.

BAD END EFFECTS
There is nothing more frustrating than spending hours of endless effort, brain flogging and eye straining just to see some crummy message or daft effect. The least software houses could do is to reward our efforts with a stunning end effect. The top 5 all time bad end effects in my opinion are: *Dun Darach, Ghosts n Goblins, Fairlight, Underwurlde* and *Green Beret*.

The best 3 are: *Everyone's a Wally, Max Headroom* and *Herbert's Dummy Run*.

So come on software houses, make our efforts worth while and make some good end effects for us.

RMW Yorks, Cottingley, Bingley, W Yorks

PS Who's that ugly bloke on the back issues page?

You seem to agree on the end effects being generally poor. But most programmers I know are baffled as to how to fit them in when so many games use every spare byte available and I can't quite see you waiting for a few minutes while another load of code gets dumped into the Spectrum to provide an end effect.
LM

The uglybloke writes: Quake in your clogs Yorkie. I'm on my way with the art garret scalpel to bring back a piece of your anatomy.

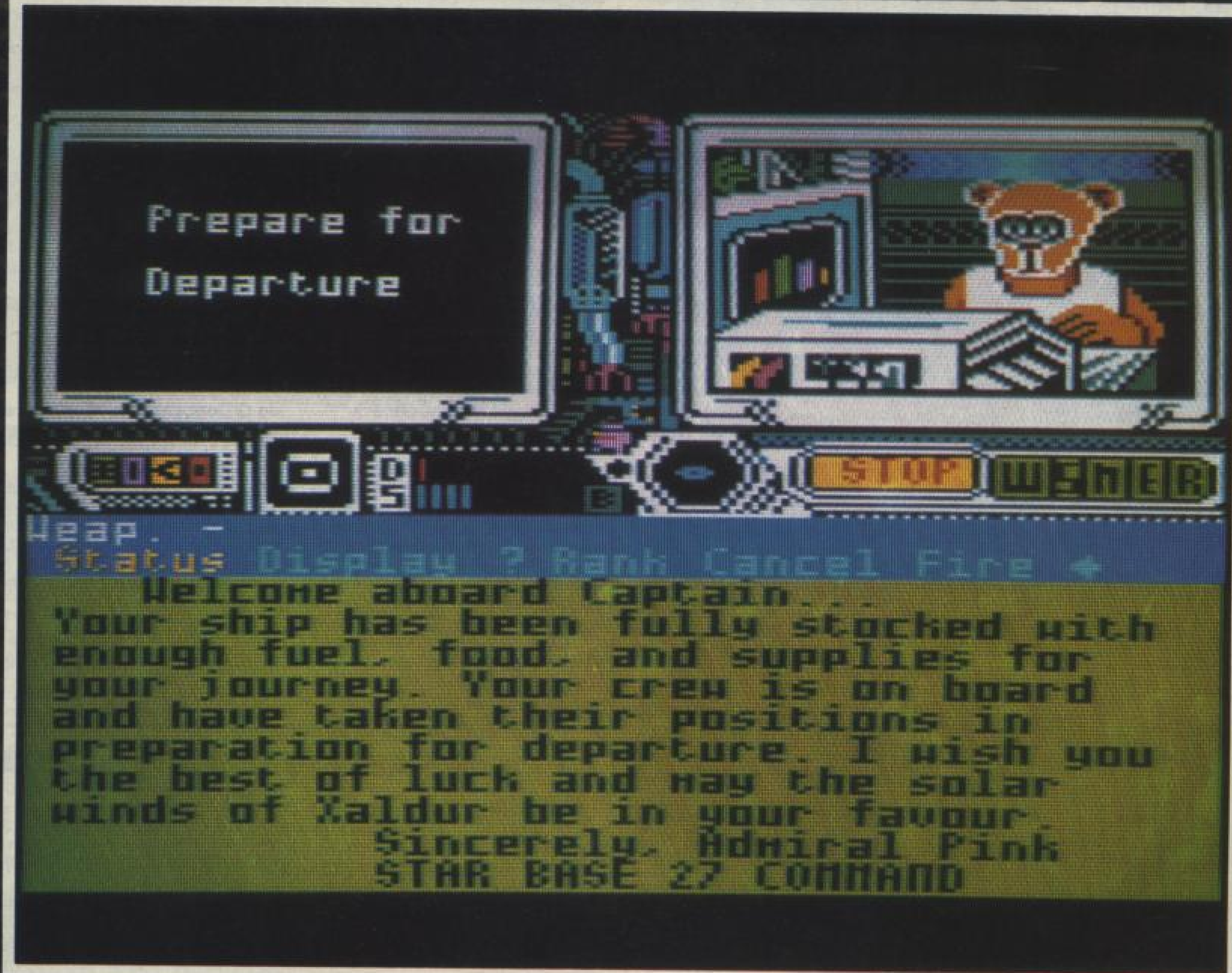
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captain of the Psi-5 Trading Company; because, needless to say, these marauders are not going to take too kindly to any last ditch efforts to spoil their little intergallactic carnage.

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WORLD CUP CARNIVAL

After the slagging CRASH readers gave to US Gold's World Cup Carnival, it only seems fair to let them reply, and here is the letter I received recently . . .

US Gold American Software
Unit 2 and 3 Holford Way
Holford
Birmingham

Dear CRASH
Subject: World Cup Carnival
US Gold licensed this property in the summer of 1985. Our intention was to produce a program that not only gave actual computer entertainment but also gave added interest to football enthusiasts.

We duly commissioned a company, who will remain nameless, to produce a piece of entertainment software that matched, in terms of graphics and playability, Ocean's *Matchday*, but with added football associated events and some unique fun features such as 'ball control'.

We proceeded then to prepare packaging and contents which, without exception, have been praised for quality. After repeated requests to the software company for proof that the 'game' was progressing, certain searches and investigation highlighted to us that the company was imminently due to enter into liquidation and game completion could not be guaranteed. In fact, tracking down the individuals that were actually freelance and writing the versions proved almost impossible.

We then (this was the end of February) decided to sever our links and hopes of completed titles from this company and re-assign the development. We needed final versions by the first week in May and licenses were also obtained for our European offices in France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

This left us two months to assign the work, develop the games, fully test, master and package in time for the commencement of the World Cup Finals.

Anybody who knows anything about software development will tell you that a game cannot be written in two months. Our only option was to take a game that had not sold well, make modifications and add features not previously available.

Prior to the release of the game, screenshots from the Commodore version were sent to all major magazines including ZZAP! 64, CRASH's sister magazine. We then duly informed major retail chains of the title's origin and when released to the trade, told distributors to inform retail stores to tell prospective purchasers of *World Cup Carnival* that the game was an updated version of Artic's *World Cup Football*. US Gold did not mis-lead the buying public but was faced with a situation that commercial interest had to weigh heavily. Our reputation in dealing with our customer is well versed. We answer all letters and take all telephone calls. If our customers are genuinely dissatisfied with one of our titles, we offer another game at half the recommended price. The decision always being at US Gold's discretion and subject to availability.

In some respects, *World Cup Carnival* was to the good of the software market. It has set a precedent for publishers to produce quality software on the back of a licence which US Gold has been proud to have been able to achieve without exception in the past.

Conditions and timing wouldn't allow us the grace to maintain that reputation with *World Cup Carnival* although I personally feel that if the purchaser did not already own *World Cup Football*, the package offered very good value for money.

US Gold is the World's Number 1 Entertainment Software Publisher and as such, views as vital the excellent reputation it has earned with Spectrum Owners!

SIR CLIVE RETROSPECTIVE

Dear Lloyd,
The nation is in a State of Panic and why? (As if you didn't know). Yes its true Sir Clive Sinclair is out of the home computer market (industry). And no one cares. Well let me just tell you about Uncle Clive. In 1980 the world saw the launch of Sinclair's first computer — the ZX80. Then within 12 months of the happy event the ZX81 was launched, but this was only the beginning of a great era. With this Clive produced his ace in 1982 and what an ace the Spectrum is. By doing this he had created the British home computer market. Just think, if Clive hadn't made his move Commodore 64s would still be selling for £350.00. Amstrad might still have been mucking about with Hi-Fi and I would have sat around waiting for a miracle to happen. Even good old CRASH wouldn't be around. Sir Clive Sinclair may not have been a great business man but he is a computer genius and no one can question that. Sir Clive Sinclair may be gone for good, but he will live on for ever in the heart of my Spectrum.

There will never be another computer like the Spectrum.
Richard Hargreaves, Owlsmoor, Camberley

(To be spoken to the strains of 'Land of Hope and Glory')
I don't think anyone would deny the truth of what you say, Richard. As to whether Sir Clive is gone for good is another matter — he's bounced back time and time again, perhaps he's got another ace up his sleeve. Who knows?
LM

A NICE GRANNY WRITES . . .

Dear Lloyd Mangram,
The June issue of CRASH Forum contained a letter from a lady and you asked for any other ladies to write in to you. Well I am a Granny and enjoy CRASH mag and of course Forum. My children are much quicker than I am, but my grandchildren 10, in all, also enjoy trying to do the games which teach them patience and skill.

As a warden of elderly people I found I stayed at home much more, so decided I would teach myself the Computer and it has given many hours of fun. My age is 51 and though not old yet, it does surprise many people when I say I'm going to play with *Monty Mole*, *Popeye* or my favourite *Chuckie Egg*.

Thank you for your news pages in CRASH, it's a super mag and explains so well that you seem to know what you are buying.
Cheers for now
Joyce Smith, Upton, Poole, Dorset

Nice to hear from you Joyce (did you know they named a computer after you — well they did, well done). Perhaps you should try out some adventure games, you might find you're quicker than your grandchildren on them!
LM

NO MOAN AREA

Dear Lloyd,
No I'm not writing to complain about the fall and rise of Ultimate, or to winge about the price of software, or rabbit on about software piracy. And no I'm not going to moan about my CRASH arriving in like second post (or even later!!!), or try and stop poor games being reviewed, or complain about games being late for release, or about Oli's artwork. And I'm not going to write a stupid male chauvanist letter. I'm not even going to complain about the 'disgusting' pictures scattered through CRASH and from now on if everyone thought this before they wrote a letter to the Forum it would brighten up without the need for bug box (yuc!). Stop using Forum as a moaning column.
Jo O'Donovan, Croydon, Surrey

Too right, Jo. You tell em. How about some really constructive letters for a change? All this moaning and groaning is beginning to give me a complex, and you know what happens when I get a complex, I get mad and rude and (what was the word some nurd used a few months back, ah yes —) FLIPPANT. And all that does is cause more moans. Ah well, such is life . . .
LM

I'M A GAME!

Dear CRASH,
I am one of the unfortunate teenagers who have just taken their O Level/CSE exams this summer with whom Robin Grant so kindly sympathised in the August issue.

Anyway, a few days ago I was playing *Pentagram* when it suddenly dawned on me that my life is slowly transforming into a plot devised by Ultimate in a typical adventure game of theirs. You know the plot — evil spreads over a kingdom and poor old Sabre Man has to risk life and limb trying to piece a Pentagram or a similar item together in order to bring happiness and joy back to the ill-fortuned kingdom which darkness and evil has possessed for the time being.

This plot roughly resembles the unfortunate situation that I have found myself in. My mum has warned me that if I don't get a certain amount of O Level passes then my faithful Speccy will be banished to the loft while I am forced to do retakes. What's more all my copies of CRASH, plus my future subscribed issues, will be following my ill-fated Speccy into the dark realms of the loft as well. This, of course, will bring gloom and despair to life as I know it.

So you see, in my case, a number of good exam results have to be collected in order to ensure future happiness and joy in my life otherwise evil consequences will prevail. Sabre Man does have an advantage over me because he can have as many goes as he likes in order to achieve his target but as for me, I only have the one chance. Hannah Smith's Playing Tips could probably help Sabre Man out, if his life gets that little bit too dangerous in his adventuring, but there is no way she could help me out on this one.

So its 'cheerio' from me folks, if my luck runs out which there is a pretty good chance that it will. It would probably be of some consolation to me to see this letter printed in your great magazine because the September Issue of CRASH could be my last CRASH for quite a long time and it would be pleasing to see this letter printed somewhere in its Forum.
Andrew Callaghan (16), Forest Hill, London

What an absolutely horrific tale. Tell your mum that if she does anything of the sort I'll use all my influence with the Ludlow mafia to get them to change her mind. I'm sure you've had your results long ago by now, and we all hope they were good. Incidentally, Robin Candy proved to be a real clever boots by getting loads of O levels. I always knew that boy would go a long way and doubtlessly all of it downhill!
LM



GROVEL TOGGLE

Dear Lloyd,
Allow me to introduce myself, I am DROID MK16 and it's part of my programming to read CRASH and your excellent Forum every month. (GROVEL MODE OFF).

As I was flicking through the pages of the afforementioned Forum, I noticed an increase in letters concerning the so called GIRLIES. One of the items which grabbed my attention was one from a Mr P Schofield, who is obviously some kind of male chauvinist.

All this rubbish, and unnecessary rubbish at that, is not worth the space, even if you do proceed to pick them apart in your reply. I personally, or Droidally as I'm not a person, have no time for both chauvinists and feminists as their views are very biased and destructive, leaving a nasty taste in the mouth of both sexes who could not care either way, but take people as they come.

I do not think women should be stereotyped as I know several of the human persuasion who are witty, attractive, and clever with it. I think the girls (and blokes) at Crash Towers do a great job and wish you all the very best for the future.

I also think that the lovely Hannah Smith (hope that's not too patronising for you) is a very welcome change from the Candyman, and writes a very good Playing Tips column.

So think again, Schofield, you jumped up prat, or I will send round a few heavy automated pals of mine to deal with you and anyone else with chauvinist or feminist leaning in their letters.

Yours most faithfully, (WHOOPS Grovel mode again)
DROID MK16, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey

Through my good offices, the girls and blokes of CRASH Towers thank you kindly. Now you'd better go get your batteries recharged.
LM

REGIONAL EDITIONS?

Dear Lloyd,
Is there a Welsh CRASH? Having bought the August edition in Derby, I took it on holiday.

When I returned my friend had bought the same edition but he had bought his copy when, 'Gadzooks!' cried my friend, as we turned to page 83 'On The Screen'.

In the bottom left-hand corner of the page was the screen dump of the castle courtyard. This was coloured pink and purple. So what? you cry.

Well, after a quick cycle round to my friend's house, he produced his CRASH and Yes! The castle courtyard in his edition was indeed yellow and green!

So, is there a Welsh CRASH? We demand an explanation!
M Edwards and R Powell, Barrow-On-Trent, Derby

Well I think you're jolly lucky, it's like having a rare, wrongly printed stamp! No, there's no Welsh edition of CRASH, what's probably happened is that you have one of those very few copies that get out when the printer changes paper rolls in mid-run. A few get slightly ruined, for a second or so it can take the printing plates to get the ink balance correct again resulting, here and there, in some odd colour combinations.
LM

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?

Dear Lloyd,
What's happening at CRASH Towers? Has Graeme Kidd's BO got too much for you all. First Robin Candy then Gary Liddon and now you! Are you leaving CRASH for LM or what?

Well if all the new staff are like Hannah Smith you won't hear any complaints from me (she can wrestle with me any time know what I mean)! Less of the sexist (me, sexist HA) remarks, onto something more constructive.

Minson is great, his inane 'Fear and Loathing' is ace, even if I'm none the wiser after reading it.

I must congratulate CRASH on introducing a PBM game section to the magazine. I was in danger of dying of boredom as my Spectrum had blown a fuse (A IN4148 diode and a A 780516 regulator to be exact) so I joined Vorcon Wars. Brill!! (any players on Vorcon 60 better watch out cos FRIDGER will settle for nothing less than total domination).

I think praise is also needed for Sean Masterton for having to put up with anencephalous (new word for you) prattlers like Peter Shields (Frontline Forum No 31) he'd need more than shields if I got hold of him. Just cos frontliners are in the minority there is no need to scrap frontline.

Otherwise you're gonna have a revolution on your hands matey (sorry about that outburst but people really piss me off).

All you have to do to make CRASH perfect for me is to expand PBM Mailbox, Frontline and put the reviewers initials after the reviews. A pin up poster of Hannah Smith wouldn't be a bad idea (simple to please aren't I)?
Mark Frewell, Boughton, Notts

I'm not going anywhere Mark. They've just borrowed my initials for the new mag (only now they're pretending they have nothing to do with my name — something to do with calling it a Lively Magazine I think, or Lazy Morons, or Last Minute — the way it gets done no doubt). The biggest change is that Graeme Kidd has sort of left CRASH, left in the sense that they've booted him upstairs to become Publishing Executive of all the computer titles. He's now a Big Kidd and having trouble getting into his Doc Martens. Funny thing life, ain't it?
LM

THE ULTIMATE PRAISE ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▽

Dear Lloyd,
I am sick and tired of reading people praise and slag off Ultimate every month. I myself was a true Ultimate fan up until the release of *Pentagram*. This game was a complete waste of money it's exactly the same as everything else around at the moment. However, it is not their fault that once great and way ahead of the rest, they have fallen into a slump, and if they truly are great they will recover.

I think people should stop going on about Ultimate and take more notice of Odin for in my view they are the leading software house in the country.

I must however, thank you for telling us about the Loki being pure rubbish for this is one relieved 128K owner.
RJ West, Rainburn, Kent
PS You had better publish this or I'll keep writing until you do.

I've printed it — so stop writing. No I don't mean that — honest. I'm not sure I totally agree with you, however. What do other CRASH readers think?
LM



HUNTER RULES KAYOED

Dear Lloyd,
Let me introduce myself. My name is Geraint Jones and I am President of the Hunter S Minson fan club. Our sole aim in life is to promote the great man himself, his drinking habits and to destroy all those who oppose him. So, JA Attwood, our hit gang is already on its way to Norfolk to seek you out. Even now two stretched limousines escorted by a fleet of Ferraris and Lamborghinis may be closing in on your abode. If you don't swear allegience to Mr Minson they will give you a pair of concrete shoes and drop your rotting torso into a vat of Bloody Mary's.

Such is the fate of those who blaspheme against Hunter S Minson. Nobody has ever said that our society doesn't give its victims fair warning (none that have lived long enough anyway), so blasphemers, next time you see somebody in a Hawaiian style shirt, watch for the burst of insect repellent (as demonstrated by the almighty Minson in issue 27, page 14) it may spell your end.

I also have a warning for you Mangram. Print any more anti-Minson letters and you will find a long limousine outside your cottage, unless of course you send the squad *Heartland* and *Cauldron II*. Don't try to get the Ludlow mafia onto us as we have infiltrated that puny excuse for a protection racket. But we know that that thought never crossed your mind as you're a nice guy really and wouldn't like your kneecaps broken.
Hoha,
Geraint Jones, 16 Bloodymary Road, Hungersville, Loathingshire

I wouldn't dream of printing another anti-Minson letter ever again, as I require my kneecaps for kneeling on. I can say little about the great man himself because the few times I've bumped into him I haven't been able to see anything through the glare from those appall . . . (sorry) stunning shirts. Still, you can rest assured that you're not the only reader alarmed at the Attwooditude . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I think the opinion voiced in the letter written by JA Attwood, from Norwich was in itself excessive.

Hunter S Minson is paid for doing a job, a job he does well. As a journalist he paints a colourful picture of life behind the scenes in the computer world.

If JA Attwood thinks that Hunter S Minson's behaviour is slightly below par at launches I can assure him that he is not the only one to behave in this manner. I know two or three journalists and from what I have gleaned from them Hunter Minson is a kitten compared to some.

The offer of a free meal and free booze to the ligging manes creaks a buzz of excitement, and why shouldn't it? Epicureanism (look it up) is far from dead.

A sense of humour should be exercised, and the articles of men like Hunter should be read in a jovial, lighthearted way.

More power to your drinking arm Hunter, from a loyal fan!
Ben James, Clifton, Bristol

It rather depends on whether you think CRASH readers want to see behind the scenes. Some would argue not, but from my experience, most do, and Minson does it well (kneecaps, please stop telling me what to write . . .). Someone else who also enjoys kneeling in comfort has this to say . . .

Dear Lloyd,
Here is my view on Minson's Column. It's different, funny and good to read because he goes into detail wherever he goes (games launches etc) or games lunches as he would prefer!

There is nothing else like this column in other rags so, well done CRASH for packing so many different things into the magazine
CAN, Wood Green, London

. . . and . . .

Dear Lloyd,
Don't sack John Minson.
Alex Marsh, Billericay, Essex

. . . and again . . .

Dear Lloyd
Mr Minson can relax because I am certainly a fan of his. His column is entertaining, amusing and a piece of professional journalism. I'm sure his column is not going to encourage any younger readers to go out and 'throw up on volvos'. Come on, after all it's only a bit of fun and isn't that what computers are all about?

And look at T'zer in *YS*. Her column's written in similar style and nobody complains about her.
Lynda Matthias, Liegh, Lancs

. . . and and . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I happened to read JA Attwood's letter on the excellent column by Hunter S Minson. I can't tell you how utterly embarrassed I am to live in Norwich. I find it embarrassing that JA Attwood should be so uncultured and not have heard of or read any Hunter S Thompson. I myself find him highly amusing and have a book which houses such greats as 'The Great Shark Hunt', 'Fear and Loathing at the Super Bowl', 'Jimmy Carter and the Great Heap of Faith' and many more. I do hope you will continue with the column and not be put off by morons such as JA who do not think before they speak. Please don't suppose that all Norfolk Dumplings are uncultured, country yokels.
Yail Bloor, Norwich, Norfolk

. . . and yet again . . .

Dear Stereogram,
To JA Attwood and CH Evans — Paws off Hunter S Minson! The Fear and Loathing page in CRASH is the page I first turn to on buying the magazine, being very humourous and well written. To those critics, if you want to read serious news turn to the news pages of CRASH, Mr Minson is obviously CRASH's answer to Nigel Dempster, with Fear and Loathing being the CRASH Diary. More free lunches and liquid ones too to his elbow!
Philip Green of Sudbury — right on!

. . . but what's this!?

Dear Lloyd,
I will put my point of view on Hunter S Minson's 'Fear and Loathing', as you requested. After reading his column I thought to myself, what was all that about? Reading it again it dawned on me . . . Absolutely Nothing!! It had hardly anything relevant to home computers and was as boring as it was long. Please remove Hunter S Minson from this column or try and get him to write more relevantly!
Richard Poppleston, Benwell, Newcastle-u-Tyne

Better watch out for those li'll ol' kneecaps Richard.
LM

HANNAH HAS GREAT TIPS

Dear Lloyd,
Does Hannah Smith have breasts the size of Samantha Fox's, a waist as thin as Duchess Fergie's and buttocks the size of Anneka Rice's?

If not then why is this beautiful body displayed on the cover of issue 31?
Yours drodingly,
Peter Reid, Dunfermline, Fife

It's all true, Peter, and she's much more stunning than C&VG's Melissa Ravenflame. If you attended the recent PCW Show at Olympia, you may have seen the 'battle of the stickers'. C&VG started it by plastering the Newsfield stand in ones saying 'Here's Mud in your Eye Hannah Smith'. I'm told the Newsfield team retaliated furiously on the Saturday with stickers saying, 'Stop Raving Dame, stand up Melissa and accept the challenge.' There was even a paddling pool at the ready and a supply of lime green jelly for the two tipstresses to wrestle in — but Melissa never showed up . . .
LM

HELP AN ADDICT

Dear Lloyd,
I write this letter because no-one else has done it. Someone's got to be first, it might as well be me.

You see I am addicted to computer magazines. Well that's not too serious you might think, but it is driving me nuts. I read CRASH, *Sinclair User*, *Your Computer*, *Computer & Video Games* and about six Dutch magazines you have never heard of. I hardly ever read anything else. There isn't time! As soon as I have finished reading through one load of magazines the next load appears. My greatest fear in life is that I miss one issue of a magazine. I read them long before I even owned a Spectrum, yes I do own one now, but playing games? Hah! Even if I would have any money left to buy programs I probably wouldn't know what to buy: I am spoiled for choice: Smashes, Star Games, Classics etc, all of them programs no self-respecting Spectrum owner should be without. Well, I am!

My family have been very understanding, but right now they are trying to get me to talk to a 'very nice gentleman'. You've guessed it: a shrink.

So here's some advice to all of your readers out there: stick to one magazine (CRASH is not a bad choice), or you could end up like me. You wouldn't want that to happen, would you?
Michel van Staveren, 1012VH Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Perhaps you should look at it the other way, Michel, that it is the others who are mad and you who is sane. The Dutch are enormous magazine readers anyway (pity the British aren't the same!) and you may just be suffering a slightly advanced condition of being Dutch. If you want to put your 'shrink' off, just ask him for a reading list of international psychology magazines . . .
LM

THOUGHT THIS WAS A NO-MOAN AREA?

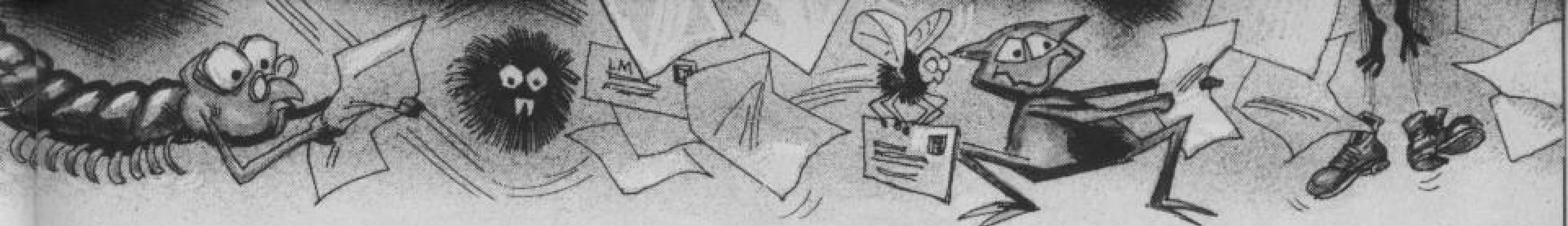
Dear (Urgh!) Lloydy Poos,
Don't read this smelly old piece of paper cos it's totally meaningless.

Moan 1. Don't let puffs like Mr P Schofield write a load of sexist crap like the stuff you printed on page 35 of August issue. Most females are human except for my sister (Hello Lindsey) and her friend (Hello Batie) who is a distant relative of the cherry (her nose is a cherry).

Moan 2. This has nothing to do with computers or CRASH. Would you please tell my cat to use the garden and not my bed for a cat's duties.

Moan 3. Have longer reviews and the reviewers name after every comment.

Moan 4. Kill the Ed, Graeme



Kidd, Robin Candy and yourself and send me Hannah Smith's (bissy kissy) address. Also kill the pervy who only gave *Pyracurse* a one page review and 88% for graphics. It deserves at least 95%. I just lurve them zombies wiv the stakes driven through their hearts.

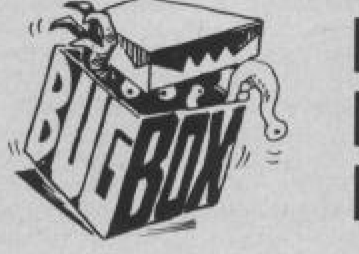
Moan 5. Don't print my address cos I don't want Mr P Schofinessle writing to me to complain. Remember to send me Smithie's address and give her mine.

Paul Rocball, East Ham, London

Hannah is very flattered you want her address but unfortunately she has no home to go to, sleeping and working at her computer. Otherwise you're right, I never should have read this smelly bit of paper.
LM

A SPANISH VIEW

Dear Lloyd,
I am a 16 year old Spanish boy and I have been reading CRASH for 18 months. I have many friends who read CRASH and we think it is very good. I saw the issue 31 which my English penfriend buys and I have some points to make:



1. Minorities.
Peter Shields in the Frontline Forum says the Frontline and other minorities should be finished. This is not good. The different parts of the magazine is what makes it interesting. Finishing them would make it all the same and make a boring magazine, si?

2. Budget Games
The reviews of budget games is stupido! Why does the price of the game hardly affect the 'Value for Money' score? Example: *Podder*, 99p, overall 54%, value only 58%.

3. Manngramm
What does he think he is making?? He never answers the serious letters seriously but is getting angry on the joking letters, eg the Girlie Takeover letter, issue 31. Some CRASH people are saying he does not exist, I am thinking it's better if he did not.

4. Fear and Loathing
What is all this moaning about Minson? He is the best thing in CRASH.

La saluda atentamente,
Miguel Martinez, Girona, Espana

Point 3 nearly got your letter in the waste paper bin, young Spanish gent. How dare you cast aspersions on my abilities. I, Lloyd Mangram (please note the English spelling), am what makes CRASH what it is, if you don't mind. As for that brightly coloured Hawaiian butterfly of a roving journalist called Minson — well you can have the kneecaps back — so there.



A RUN DOWN

Dear Lloyd,
Have no fear, Lloyd, I am not writing to say that I'm a male chauvinist pig (cause I'm not).

No indeed, I write to congratulate you and thank you for an excellent magazine, that has kept me enthralled enough to pay a pound each month for the last two years and to write this letter.

Yet I am saddened at the loss of Robin Candy and Robin Candy's Playing Tips, which he brought from puke to pokes (as the saying goes). But wait, let us not talk about this young attractive new tipster by the name of Hannah Smith who has saved Playing Tips and what a great job she has done of it as well and hopefully she will bring it to the highest standard in the future.

I also congratulate you on the PBM mailbox and what a great job Brendon Karanagh has done of it.

All the other regulars are Brill as well, Merely Mangram, SM's Frontline, DB's Adventure Trail, Forum, Tech Niche, Lunar Jetman (how about Terminal Man II) to name but a few. And every one deserves a round of applause Oh Yes! And a special thanks to Graeme Kidd (May his Doctor Marten Boots reign the carpets of CRASH for many a year to come).

Tell Cameron Pound to keep up the good work because his photos compliment the reviews like Laurel and Hardy compliment each other.

S Davies, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan

Graeme's boots have certainly ruined over the carpets of CRASH for some time now. Hate to think what his bigger ones are going to do to the lush, hotel-quality pile. Actually, I'd better be good now that he's turned into another Power That Be's. (Have you noticed how many times I've been passed over in the promotion stakes. Just as well I'm not the sort to moan and complain).
LM

THE SOFTWARE KILLERS

Dear Lloyd,
I thought I'd write to let you know how I feel about software (horrible) houses!! Oh 'groan' I hear you cry but it gets me really angry to think how they are holding back the home computer Industry and they're attitude towards it.

Only last week I heard that Enterprise Computers had gone bust, why? Well the answer is simple, people didn't buy it. Oh Wow! I hear you all think, but listen, the Enterprise had hardly any Software available for it, why? because no damn software house would produce software for it because it didn't sell!!! This seems like a pathetic attitude to take! If software houses produced software for it, people would buy it and everyone would be happy.

It has got to the stage where no company will produce software for any other computers beside Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPCs. When you think about it the Speccy 48 has been pushed to its limits, the Commodore 64 reached its limits years ago and the Amstrad is hardly a quantum leap! But until software houses change their attitude in the 1990s we will be stuck with 80s computers when we should be having super high tech computers and many more companies will end up like Enterprise when they had a marvellous computer, (some already have).

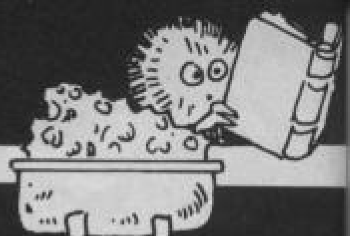
Simon Jones, Kings Norton, Birmingham

You seem angry and surprised about the Enterprise, yet hardly anyone else is, I think. When the Spectrum was released, the fledgeling software industry such as it was were easily able to leap up from producing ZX81 games by converting them straight to the Spectrum. Development of software was cheap because the punters didn't actually expect too much then. Software houses could make money, survive and prosper to do better things. When the Amstrad was launched, the company had taken care to ensure a reasonable quantity of utilities and software was already available and backed up their hardware by also becoming a (non too successful) software house themselves, helping Spectrum houses to convert existing games by the hundreds to the CPC464. The Commodore, already a massive worldwide success, could draw heavily on hundreds of American games, also cheaply converted to run on British machines. None of this did the Enterprise have — no real back up at all.

You can't expect software houses (who have to live just like you and me) to spend thousands of pounds paying for programmers, promotions and advertising to develop an Enterprise game when there were probably only three to four thousand machines sold (don't know the actual figures). It would mean selling hardly any copies of the games. Equally, who wants to buy a computer with no software to run on it? A vicious circle which other manufacturers have managed to crack. Enterprise didn't.
LM

And talking of recharging batteries, it's time to replace the cracked leather dustcover of my Hermes, unlock the chains from the old bicycle, and wend wearily off up the hill to Mangram View Cottage while the rowdier elements of the team like Michael 'Skippy' Dunn and Ben (I didn't get to bed until 6 in the morning last night) Stone join Greyboots Kidd, carpet scourge and bigger than ever bossy boots and Hannah (Flamed out the Raving Dame) Smith in the local hostelry they refer to as the Pig and Ballbearings (would you drink in a place with a name like that)? I wouldn't — that's why I'm off home. see you next month . . .

CRASH COURSE



by Rosetta McLeod



PROGRAMMED BY TEACHERS

It is interesting to see that my favourite programs this month were designed, written and produced by practising teachers. Andy Watson in Aberdeen and Bill Elliot in Plymouth, have both become aware that much of the educational software on the market is not really what teachers in schools are looking for, and so have come up with their own products. If you expect these to be amateurish, you'd be wrong — Expose **and** Nightmare/Potholer **are both extremely professional packages which have been thoroughly tested in the classroom.**

Andy Watson has been interested for many years in the potential of the computer in the classroom, and as a teacher of English, and more recently, working with remedial children, he has built up tremendous expertise in his field. Bill Elliot also, has reaped the benefits of his computing knowledge. Seventeen out of his class of twenty-eight children at Southway Junior School own Spectrums, and indeed, are avid readers of CRASH. Over to them for their comments on Potholer **and** Nightmare**:**

"I like Nightmare *because of all the different monsters in it like the Number Gumber who knocks you for six."*
Ben Davey

"Every time you got killed by monsters you just couldn't wait until your next go to find out what would happen next." **Simon Rash**

*"*Nightmare *has a lot of riddles and lots of different monsters. This game is very interesting for people with an imagination."*
Carl Bates

"Pothole is a game for all the family. It is well put together and is a long game."
Sarah Green

"It is good how you have to work out plans to get over a river and try to rescue your friends."
Steven Morris

"I like it when the computer gives you funny remarks, then when you get clues, that is when your brain has to work."
Jason Rowe

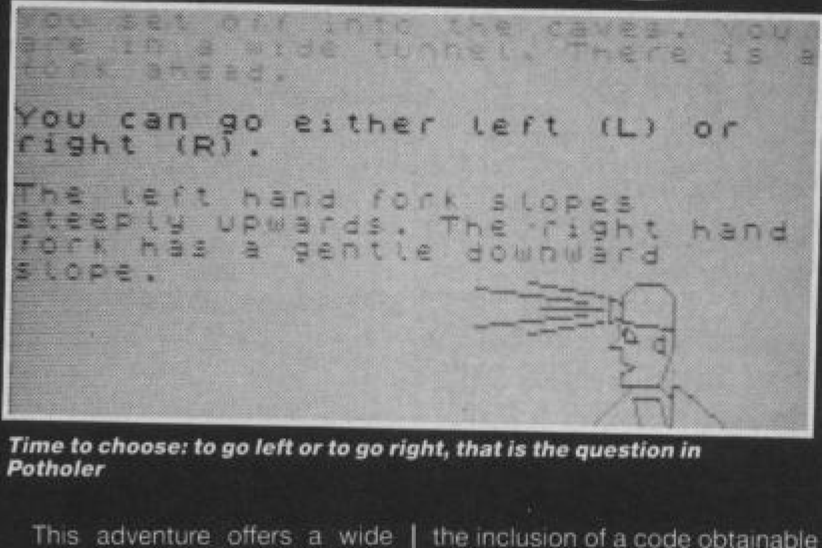
NIGHTMARE and POTHOLER

Producer: **Southway Software**
Retail Price: £6
Age range: **7**

Both of the programs on this cassette were written by W H Elliot, a teacher at Southway Junior School in Plymouth. To solve the problem of lack of funds for software purchase, most of the profits from the sale of *Nightmare* and *Potholer* go straight into school funds. The programs are specially structured for classroom use with groups of children, and the screen text directs the children towards a variety of activities.

Nightmare is an adventure game in which the children have to rescue Princess Pru who is being held captive by Naughty Nora. After visiting a few locations, the players are given a task to complete. Tasks include creative writing — descriptions of the castle using words such as battlements, sinister, portcullis and drawbridge, art work, solving codes, number activities, and even research to find out the capital cities of France, Turkey and Portugal. The idea is that each group of children will work at its own pace, and will spend a relatively short time at the computer before going off to complete an assignment.

The game is extremely enjoyable, and the colourful graphics hold the players' attention. In both of the games, note-taking skills play an important role. In *Potholer* for instance, the adventurers have to rescue their friends who are long overdue from a caving expedition, using ith the following equipment: a rucksack containing food, batteries, clothes and a first-aid kit; a knife with many blades; an electric lamp; a 20m rope; a life jacket; and a small spade. One of the first tasks in this game is to work out how to cross over a stream without getting the rucksacks wet, and a later problem has you working out how to get through a long passage which is too narrow to crawl through wearing them. Problems such as these are superb for getting children to think and to discuss their ideas with each other.



Time to choose: to go left or to go right, that is the question in Potholer

This adventure offers a wide scope for art work, as the groups have to produce, for example, cave paintings of strange animals. If the players complete their mission successfully, they are invited to appear on television to tell their story.

I thought that both *Nightmare* and *Potholer* were marvellous programs for use both in the classroom and at home. The only reservation I have is that after completing each task away from the computer the players have to start at the beginning of the game again and work quickly through until they reach the point where they left off. This could have been avoided by the inclusion of a code obtainable from the teacher on successful completion of an assignment, which would allow the children immediate access to the appropriate point in the game.

COMMENTS

Control keys: kept simple for young children to operate
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: excellent
Use of colour: eye-catching
General rating: Both games are outstanding examples of educational adventure programs. Don't miss them!



EXPOSE

Producer: **Key Software**
Retail Price: **£4**
Age Range: **Designed with the 10-14 age group in mind, but can be adapted to suit any child who can read.**

Every primary school and every secondary English department ought to invest in a copy of this program. The writer, Andy Watson, is a teacher of children with special learning needs and he has devised this program especially to help children with their language development, particularly with the skills which are essential for fluent reading and comprehension.

The program contains a wide selection of passages in which all the lower case letters have been replaced by blanks. The player can use a variety of methods to reconstruct the whole text using knowledge of spelling and comprehension to predict words and phrases. There are 36 passages to chose from, loaded in groups of nine, and these cover a variety of interesting topics from fiction and non-fiction sources. When the main menu appears, the user can choose Instructions, Play game, Create text, or End.

The instructions detail the keys to use, outlining the differences between those for the Spectrum and for the Spectrum Plus. A very nice feature is that the player can select the normal Spectrum typeface or a clearer redesigned typeface. When playing the game, the passage with blanks is displayed, together with a starting score of 20 and a bonus which can range from 0 to 100.

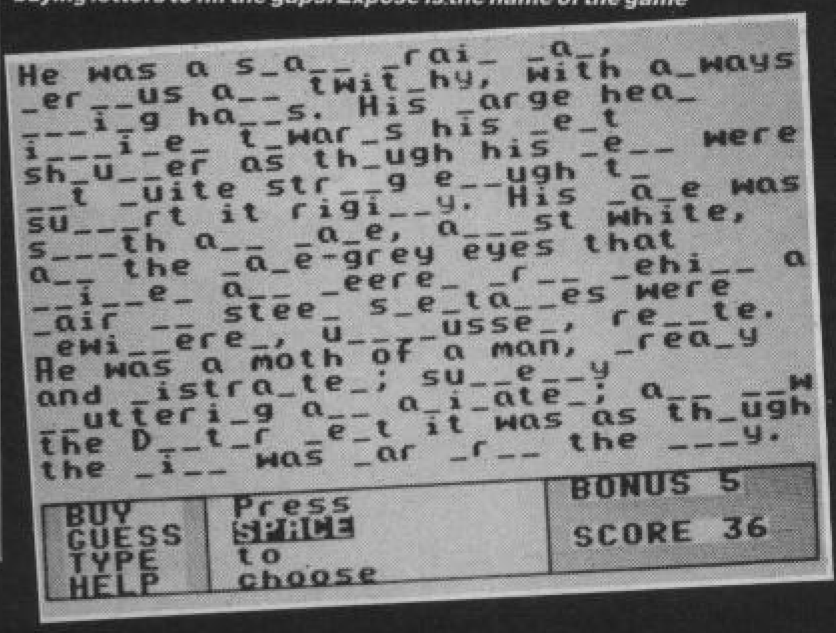
The player then has 4 options . . . Buy a letter, which reduces the score and bonus but has the advantage of revealing all instances of a given letter. Guess allows the player to type in a letter or group of letters which cannot include any existing displayed letters — if the Guess is correct, all the instances of the letters in the Guess are displayed and the score is increased. Type is similar to Guess, but this time if the player is correct, the other instances of the letters are not displayed, but the advantage of this option is that, unlike Guess, the bonus is not reduced. In order to obtain a high score, the user has to balance the advantages and disadvantages of the various options. The Help option reveals the letters that have previously been bought or correctly guessed. This game format makes the program interesting and enjoyable for children, working either individually or in small groups.

The Create Text option is invaluable for teachers who can either alter an existing passage, or can create an entirely new one. The instructions are so clear in fact, that pupils themselves could create passages for others to try. The need for correct spelling would then be immediately relevant for them. *Expose* comes complete with a detailed manual outlining the aims and objectives of the game, and a full program description. There are a number of programs on the market based on the same idea, but this is by far the best I have seen. Send off for it now to: Andy Watson, Key Software, 33 Hilton Street, Aberdeen AB2 3QT.

COMMENTS

Control keys: clearly described on the screen and easy for children to operate
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: none
Use of colour: kept simple so as not to distract
General rating: An excellent, professional program with a number of user-friendly features such as extensive error-trapping and clear screen layout with a choice of typefaces. It has been thoroughly tried out in schools, and at only £4 this is a program which everyone can afford. Highly recommended!

Trying to build up a purple passage of prose by guessing or buying letters to fill the gaps. Expose is the name of the game



STARTER WORDSPLITS AND JUNIOR WORDSPLITS

Producer: **Sulis**
Retail Price: **£7.95 each**
Age Range: ***Starter Wordsplits* 4-8 years; *Junior Wordsplits* 8-11 years.**

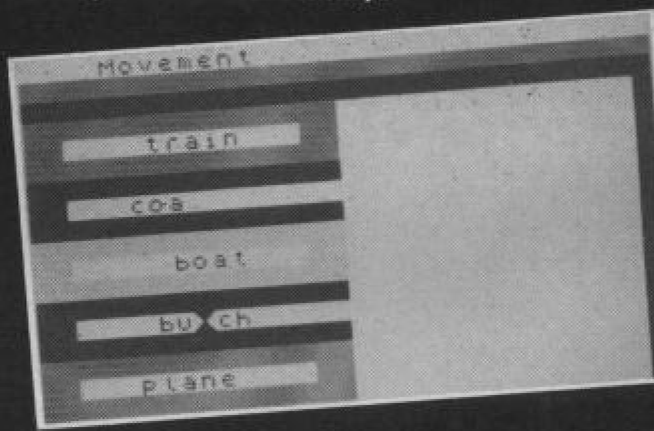
Both of these programs are aimed at improving word recognition and spelling by matching up two halves of words. In *Starter Wordsplits*, there are 14 different categories to choose from, such as Sounds, Movement, Animals, Nature and People. Each category has 18 words to be completed — more than enough to hold a young child's interest. The word ending appears on the right of the screen, and can be brought in line with its beginning by using keys 7 (up) and 6 (down). To make the two halves join up, the child must press 5.

Junior Wordsplits is a more difficult version of the same game, and you can choose to practise beginnings such as for/fore/four and des/dis or endings like — ary/-ery/-ory and -ance/-ence/-ense. Each game begins in black and white, with colour being introduced for each correct answer. With each completion of a section the time taken is given. The programs are easy to operate and useful in their own way, but I would like to have seen a more imaginative use of graphics in *Starter Wordsplits* to motivate the younger children.

COMMENTS

Control keys: 7 to move up, 6 to move down, 5 to make the word
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: very limited
Use of colour: builds up from black and white at the start
General rating: Useful in a limited way, but rather unimaginative.

Splitting words to do with movement in Wordsplits. Cam, our photographer, is not famed for his movement — wonder why he chose this particular screen to snap?



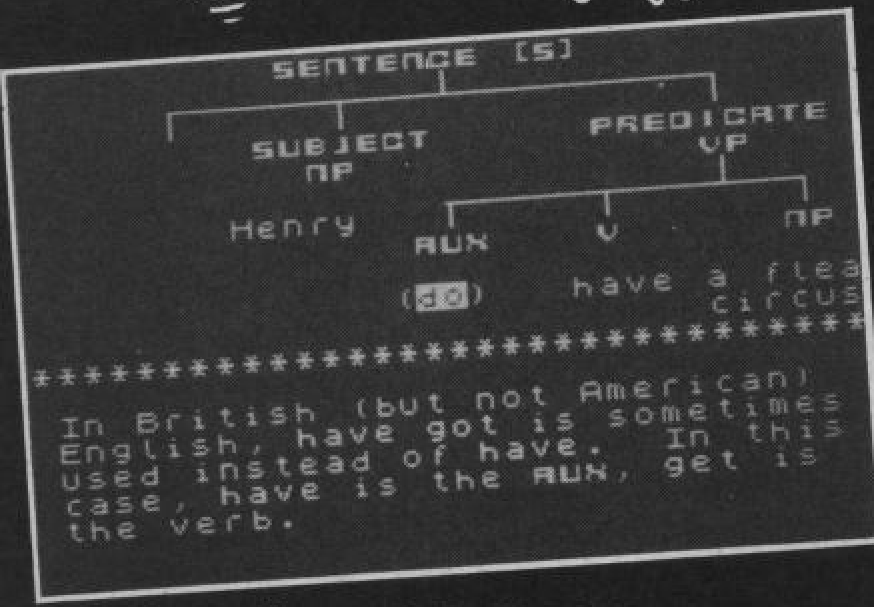
THE GRAMMAR TREE
Verbs and Adverbs

Producer: **Sulis**
Retail Price: **£10.95**
Age Range: **13**

Verbs and Adverbs is the second of a trilogy of *Grammar Tree* programs, the others being *Nouns and Adjectives* and *Sentences*. All three are intended as a popular learning kit for "anyone who wants to organise all those half forgotten bits of information about basic grammar into a straight forward, cohesive system of grammar".

Although the accompanying booklet gives information about 'correctness', the screen text misspells the word 'beginning', and the booklet includes a sentence which is grammatically incorrect! When the program has loaded, the following profound sentences appear on the screen: "In the beginning was the sentence (the





"Could put you off grammar for life.." "Henry looks as if he may well have a flea circus!

Bible calls it the Word). The sentence is divided into the subject and the predicate." An extremely irritating bleep forces you to rush through all the information given, which of course means that none of it is absorbed. The sentences used for examples, such as "Patsy sings sheepish songs", are trite and silly.

The menu on the first cassette offers a range of options from Verb and Noun phrases to Auxiliaries and Suppressed Verbs. The second cassette contains exercises to test understanding of the theory. Sentences appear on the screen, and the task is to select the correct group of words to fill the blank. One of the sentences to test knowledge of noun phrases is "............ was standing by the lamppost", and the choice is from: People today, you and me, you and he, Certainly Higgins, or Higgins.

The scoring system is rather odd as, after answering four questions, I was informed that I had scored 12 out of 12 — one of the questions was repeated three times! I'm afraid that this program is no better than the worst sort of grammar text book, and at least the latter doesn't make silly noises.

COMMENTS

Control keys: one key commands
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: none, apart from a simple diagram
Use of colour: limited
General rating: A good way to put the user off studying grammar for life.

O LEVEL MATHS

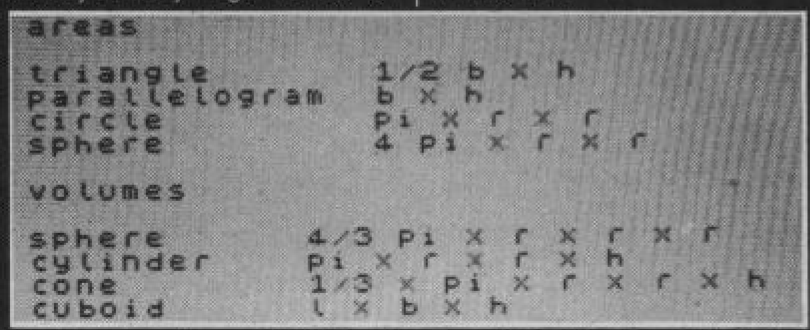
Producer: **GCE Tutoring**
Retail Price: **£5**
Age Range: **O level pupils**

There are eight programs on this tape covering arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry, sets, statistics, transformational geometry, matrices and calculus. When each program has loaded, a list of the topics it covers is displayed on the screen for selection.

The first program offers information on fractions, decimals, rounding, accuracy, indices, square roots, and so on. A brief explanation of the topic is given, together with a few examples, then the student is given more questions to tackle solo. The information is rather sketchy, but I suppose that if the program is used only for revision in conjunction with text books, students may find it quite useful. The trouble is, there are already a fairly large number of study aid programs for O level Maths revision on the market, and these are of such a high standard that a program like is made to look somewhat amateurish. It doesn't help that words are split in odd places at the end of a line, or that spelling mistakes occur rather too often to be overlooked. The program, however, is quite cheap — well within the budget of a sixteen year-old.

COMMENTS

Control keys: C to move on, together with all letter and number keys
Keyboard play: reasonable, though there are a few long pauses between screens
Graphics: limited
Use of colour: simply black lettering on a yellow background
General rating: Covers a lot of ground in rather a sketchy way. Amateurish.



Hard sums made easy? Well, hard sums explained in O Level Maths . . .

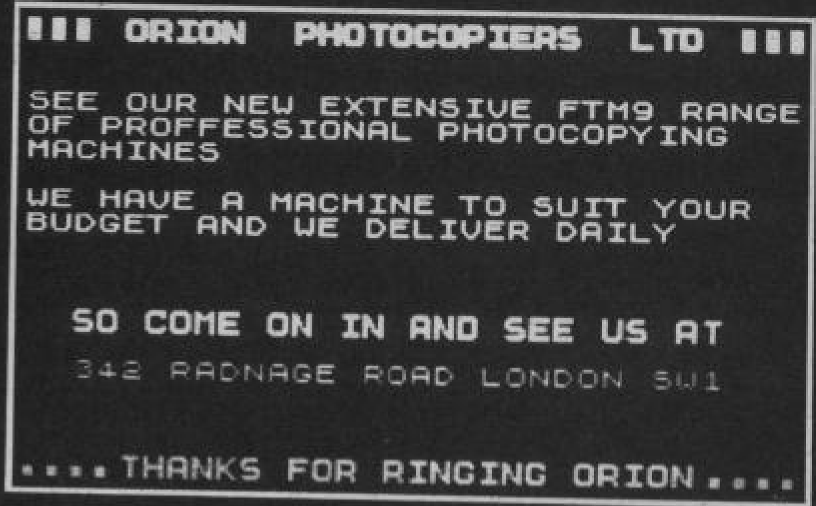
SUPERCOM

Producer: **Atlantis**
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Age Range: **12-Adult**

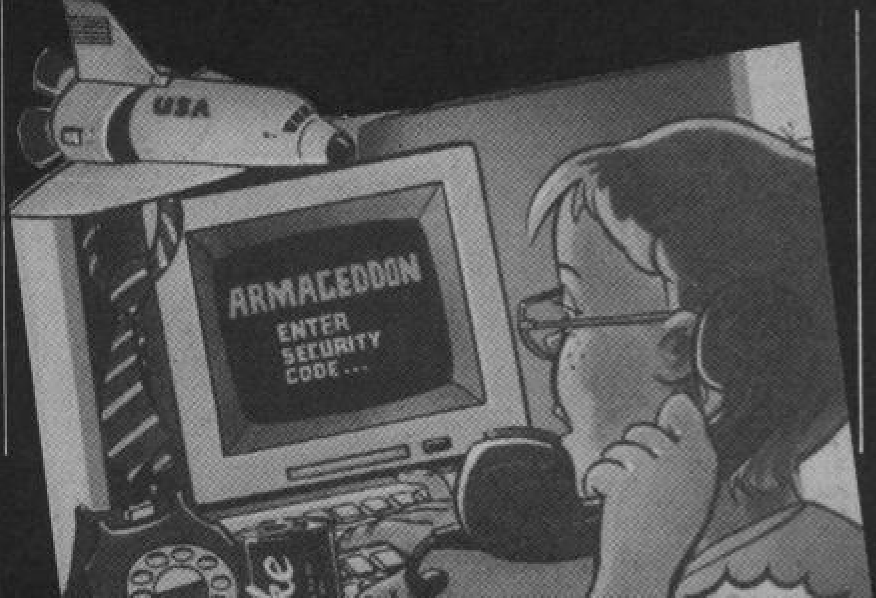
Although not a specifically educational program, this game would certainly be of use with children to encourage their thinking and note-taking skills. The storyline is as follows: the government has failed to track down the criminal mastermind who is holding the country to ransom with a computer-activated nuclear warhead. No-one knows where the computer or warhead is located. The only information you, the hacker, are given is an incomplete telephone number supplied by a C15 agent who was 'terminated' while transmitting what he had discovered.

When the program has loaded, the menu displays 5 options: you can telephone other computers; opt for an analysis of the phone link; read the data which the analysis sends to the information board; display your phone bill; or Load/Save your data. Each time *Supercom* is loaded, it contains new codes, so no two games should ever be the same.

I found this an absorbing, if rather frustrating, challenge, and the game certainly becomes addictive after a while. It is important throughout to jot down all the clues and code numbers given and, by a process of trial and error, try to hack the system. Disappointingly, I found a spelling error recurring in the screen texts, but in spite of that, this is a nice little program for encouraging logical thought.

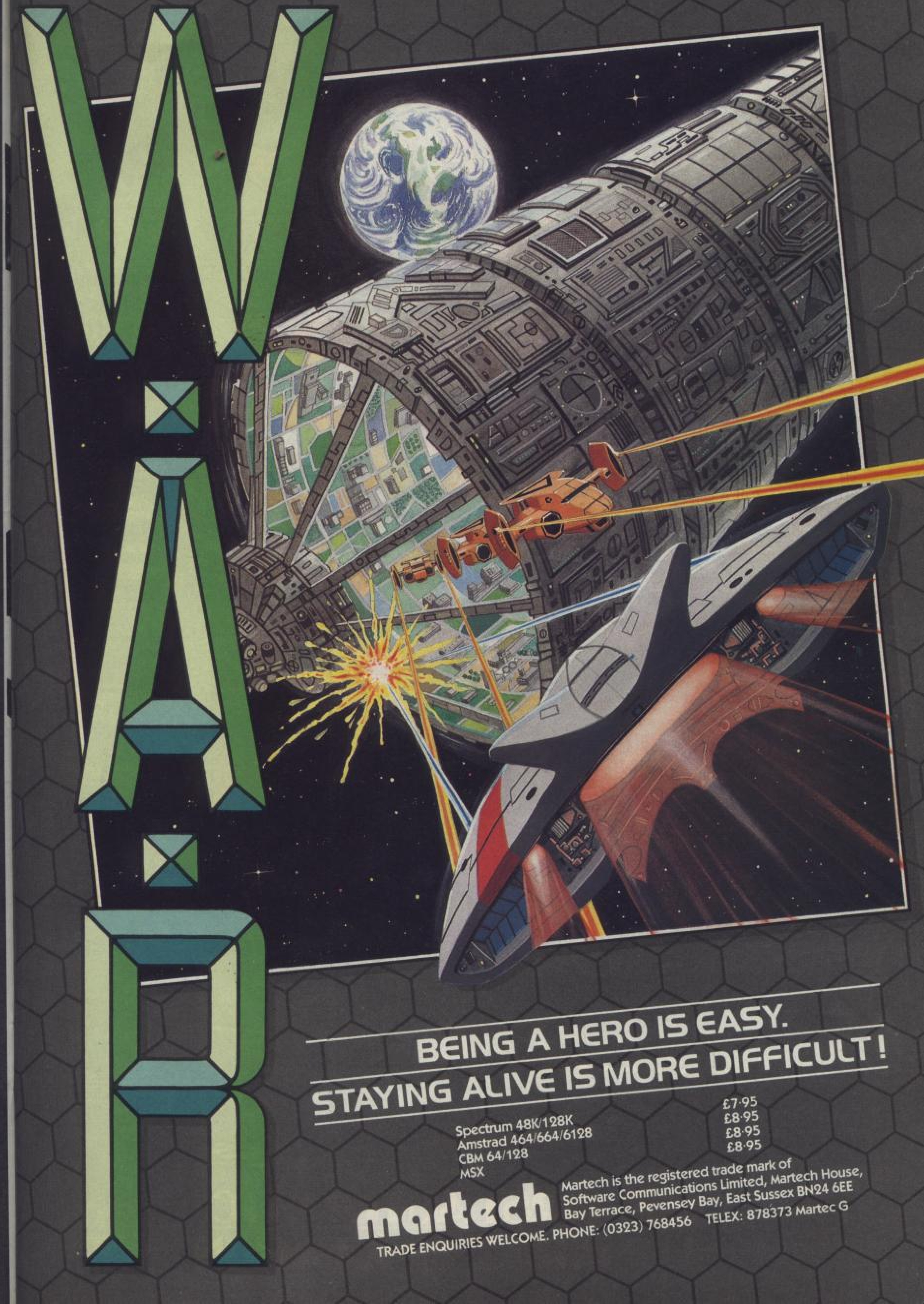


Hacking away in an attempt to foil an evil plot involving nuclear warheads, you get in touch with a photocopier firm!



COMMENTS

Control keys: number and letter keys are used to input the codes. Z returns you to the menu
Keyboard play: good, though it is impossible to delete if you make a mistake
Graphics: none
Use of colour: reasonable
General rating: This is a very cheap little program which represents very good value for money. It would be enjoyed by older children and adults.


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FRNTLINE

with Sean Masterson



SHORT 'N' SWEET

Several people wrote to defend FRONTLINE from the ravages of a letter from Peter Shields a couple of months ago, which suggested Rosetta and yours truly went to join the dole queue.

There is only one game to have a look at this month, so there's plenty of space to devote to the Forum. Keep writing in. Most of the letters were full of interesting suggestions but unfortunately, these were unprintable. Thankyou. I'm one year old this issue and it's good to be here and know people enjoy the column.

As I prepare this intro we're coming to the end of a fairly miserable summer. The PCW Show looms on the horizon (once I finish this column, it's off to Olympia for me). Next month, I'll give you a full run down on the goodies you can expect for Christmas. See you then . . .

JOHNNY REB II

Producer: **MC Lothlorien**
Retail Price: **£9.95**

This is the first offering from Lothlorien for some time and is a follow up to one of their oldest and most successful titles. Based on the American Civil War, *Johnny Reb II* is a one or two player strategy presenting the player(s) with a 'typical' action rather than a recreation of one of the many historic battles such as Bull Run or Gettysburg.

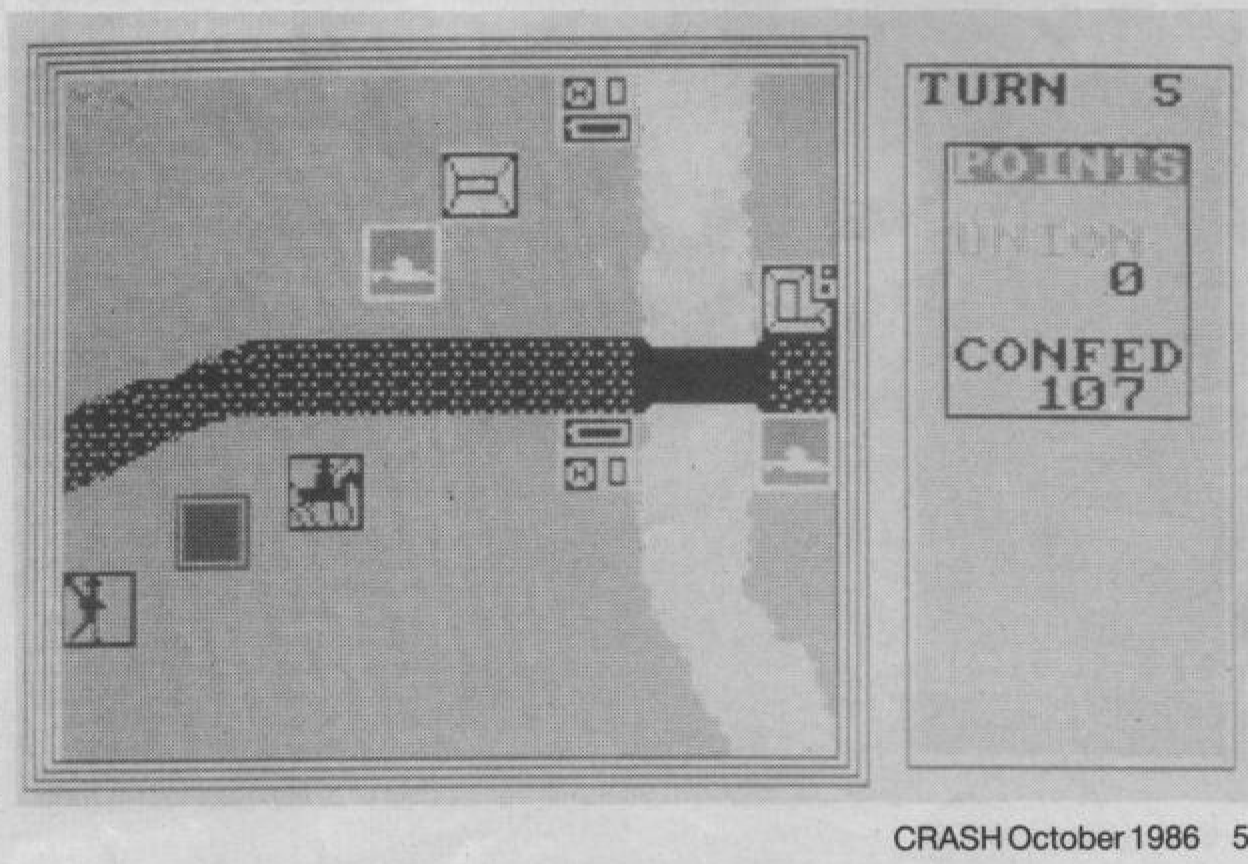
For those in need of a quick history lesson, the ACW was the result of differences between the Northern and Southern states of the USA mainly (but not entirely) over legalised slavery. Neither side actually wanted the confrontation which lasted from 1861-65 but both were caught up in unavoidable conflict in a war so bitter and complex, it literally set brother against brother. It holds interest from the strategists' point of view because it has been called the first 'modern' war.

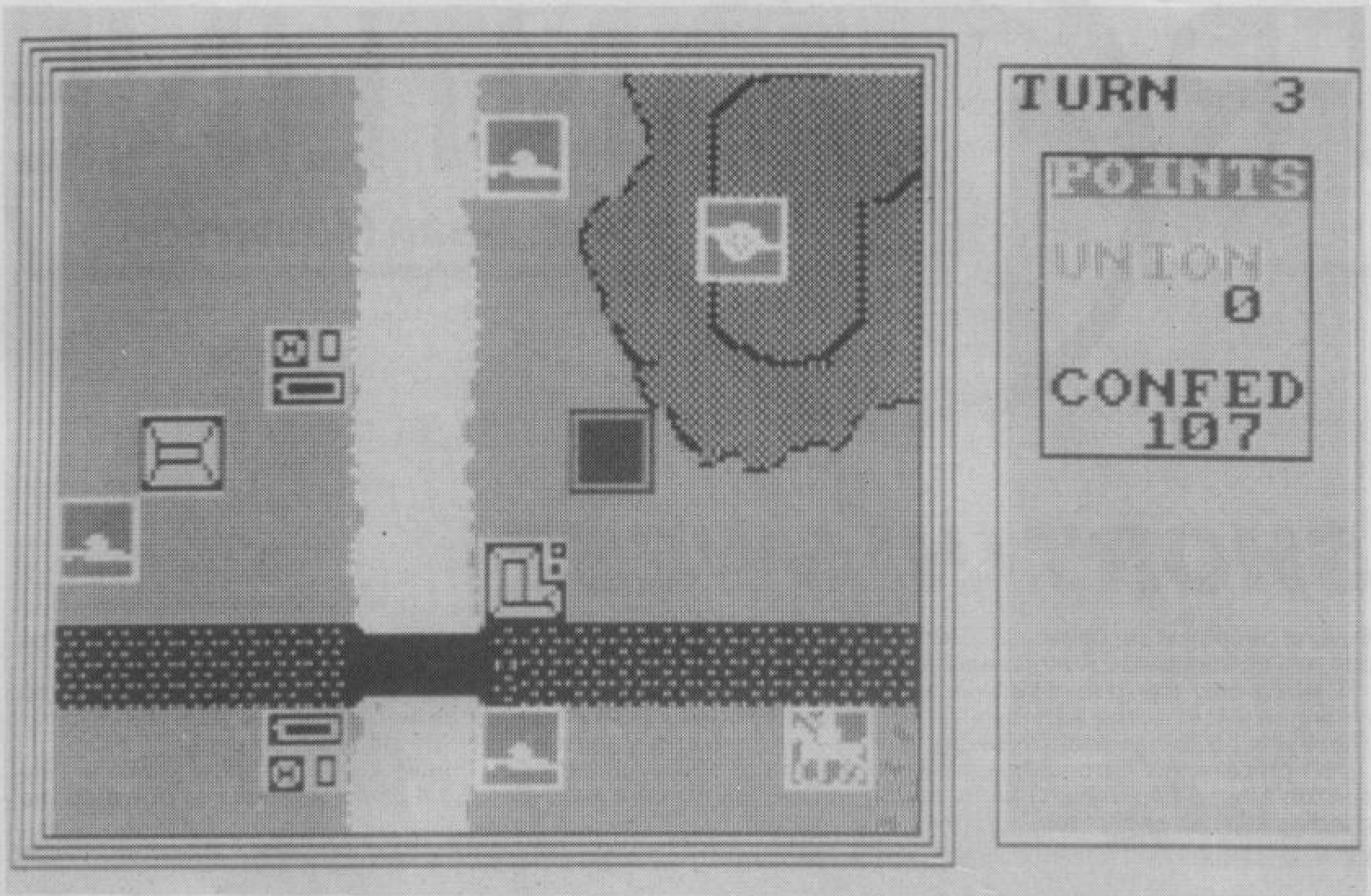
This terminology is used more in the context of new weaponry than anything else. Repeating rifles were rare during the war, but gained in numbers towards the end. Gattling guns, the forunners of the modern machine gun were also used occasionally and cavalry, whilst still maintaining an effective role in combat was armed more with slug throwing weapons than swords. The war was further complicated by the fact that whilst the North possessed the industrial might and numerical superiority, the South was better organised and trained and had fewer commitments. All this explained Lothlorien's first foray into this era. Their excuse this time was increased sophistication and better gameplay. So, how have they done?

Well, the most obviously notable feature of the new game is that it is apparently 100% machine code (something unheard of in the pre-Cambrian days of the earlier version's release) and it loads very quickly indeed. A passable title screen is then succeeded by a menu that allows limited modification of the game's parameters. Just about eveything is user definable from the control keys (or Kempston joystick option) to the balance of forces, the terrain features of the battlefield, where and when the various reinforcements arrive, game strength (on the one player version) and screen colours.

I was most impressed with the choices available to the player. When playing solitaire, the player may choose either side thanks to a flexible computer opponent (though I later discovered that the opponent is not actually that hard to beat on the first two levels). Safety features ensure that you cannot alter the force played by the computer to make things easier on yourself. It's possible to have hidden movement on the single player game but all units are always visible in two player mode.

Once the game begins, play is very straightforward. Again this is due to attention to detail in presentation. Under joystick control, a cursor is simply placed over the unit to be ordered before pressing the fire button. Information about the unit is then presented on the screen in a colour code to show levels of ammunition, morale, strength and efficiency. This display appears below the 'action' screen. To the right of the screen, a series of icons appear, each indicating a possible action such as dig in, advance, charge or fire (not







all these options are available to all units, as you will see). Joystick movement allows selection of the required order with confirmation coming from a second press of the fire button. Some orders may be elaborated upon. For instance, when advancing, you are asked whether the unit is to advance firing or not. As units carry out their orders on the main screen at the end of a turn, the unit symbols themselves will change to show the current status of those units.

Limited sound effects are employed during combat. This is normally ranged combat though melee is possible between adjacent units. Units may retreat, become routed or be destroyed depending on their performance in combat. The unit types are infantry, cavalry, artillery and supply (these units cannot fight). The exact scale of the units is never really explained throughout the game or manual but by the nature of movement, I would suspect it lies somewhere between platoon and company level.

There is a standard scenario. A Confederate force is approaching a vastly outnumbered Union outfit which must defend its side of the map while reinforcements arrive during the course of the game. It's a basic but flexible arrangement which should present plenty of challenge in a two player game. The one player version only really comes into its own on the hardest level. The on screen presentation is both logical and clear but the tiny instruction booklet is both cramped and badly laid out. There is no key reference so setting up can be slow until you become accustomed to the procedures.

Johnny Reb II is definitely a worthy successor to the original but at £9.95, I can't say I'm overly impressed, especially considering *Rebelstar* was only £1.99 and that was a better game. The best advice is to buy *Rebelstar* first. If you have that and are looking for a flexible, well presented and interesting game . . . get this.

PRESENTATION 84%
Cramped and badly laid out booklet but wonderful on screen presentation

RULES 85%
Some ommisions but otherwise well suited to the game

PLAYABILITY 85%
The unobtrusive icons are useful and fast, especially with a joystick

GRAPHICS 80%
Simple but effective and colourful

AUTHENTICITY 82%
The various unit strengths and proportions capture the essence of mid-war skirmishes

OPPONENT 79%
Flexible but not too demanding

VALUE FOR MONEY 81%
The most you could ask for this game

OVERALL 82%
Very reasonable in most respects, admirable in some. What a shame though, that in the wake of a couple of good budget games, people seem to be putting up their prices rather than bringing them down

FRONTLINE



FORUM

In which Peter Shields is well and truly hammered by FRONTLINE readers on the offensive; tips for *Chaos* and *Rebelstar* and the great computer opponent debate are all dealt with in inimitable fashion. Roll up, roll up!

Dear Sean,
Putting anti-strategy game letters in your Forum is undoubtedly strategic itself because it promotes further letters of anger/defence etc! A few notes therefore follow which I feel are relevant to the pro/con debate.

First, I subscribe to CRASH only because it reviews and takes seriously strategy games.

I wonder how many people reading CRASH have ever actually had a chance to become involved with good strategy? Two player/multi player content is what the vast majority of computer games lack and I can therefore only determine that if CRASH readers aren't unsociable or dull they simply haven't yet experienced the far greater permutations and challenge that having a human opponent provides.

To anyone interested, the major value that a game such as *Rebelstar Raiders* provides, is that while the computer does what it is best at (the donkey work and representation), the fun stems from out-thinking another mind — far more unpredictable and emotional than even the best computer opponent can provide. Try bluffing the computer or expecting it to learn from your decisions! (One day?!!!)

A second major point in strategy/tactical games is that they have a far less linear plot than even the most flexible of adventures, because you tend to begin with the whole story and work within it.

There can be several paths to success in a single game. It must be admitted that there is not, at present, much good material around but I feel sure that we are only talking about a matter of time. (Well done FIREBIRD!) Which brings me to the most important point. Who can say what the future of computer, (or other) games may be? The most certain fact is that the existing situation will change and today's minority, (as was suggested last month), may yet become a majority. I think this is particularly relevant to the multi player aspect of game interaction.

Well done CRASH for staying at the front, and full marks for printing the articles about other game areas. Its only a matter of time before they merge.

And to any who still doubt the wisdom of CRASH Towers, I predict when the computer game world changes, if they keep up this superb diverse approach, whatever happens, the magazine will be the leader. Don't knock the games if you haven't fully tried them. I bet Derek B didn't play *Chaos* with some merry friends or he would have surely been won over by the fun.

Here's to the future.

Andrew Hughman, Catford, London

PS Do search for RED SHIFT expanders.

Thank you for the kind words Andrew. I tend to hold similar views about the increasing importance of strategy games for whatever machine you care to mention. The multi-player aspect of games like these is never really considered fully, but it is the element that most closely links the genre with conventional wargaming and also provides by far the most enjoyment when playing a game. As for RED SHIFT *expanders, I'm looking, honest!*

SM

Dear Sean
Having read the FRONTLINE Forum in Issue 31, it appears that someone else has discovered the superb fantasy wargame *Chaos* (G Havenhand's letter). I feel that it is unique amongst wargames in its spectacular presentation and user-friendliness and it has not spared complexity at the cost of these. The small graphics are animated beautifully, and the sound is better than in most arcade games. The computer opponent handles its forces very skilfully, and it is a joy just to watch eight computer players slugging it out between themselves. Many more people could gain from *Chaos*, and so I urge you to give it a proper review in FRONTLINE and award it the Smash that it deserves.

Here are some tips for any new players: early players (the 1st or 2nd in a large game) have the attacking and spell casting initiative, but later ones can cast an illusion with less chance of following players disbelieving in it. Illusions are no good towards the end of the game, since wizards cast disbelief often, when they have few other spells. Protect your wizard with armour and a shield, or shadow form and a castle, since they are very weak at the start. The computer is very cautious with its wizards, and they do stay alive for a long time!

Also, try to get a magic weapon so you can attack undead creatures. If you have no magic weapon and wish to disengage combat with the undead, try pressing I for info and then enter a direction. You will attack that empty square and move onto it.

Magic woods allow you to get some new and powerful spells but remember they are not anybody's property and any wizard can use one. Fire and Gooey Blob can win (or at least save) the game if they are used properly. Walls can be used to build fortresses to hide in, but can be flown over. A good way to start is to magic bolt another wizard, or to cast something next to him. Players 2 and 7 can have an attack on five players by casting a shadow wood tree next to them.

The final trick, discovered by a friend of mine, is how to get an undead wizard. If you can become undead, you stand a good chance of winning. You must raise a mount of some kind from the dead (a horse is easiest), then get on it. If your mount is slain or vengeanced then you yourself are undead!

I would also like to start a new argument in your pages. How important is the computer opponent anyway? Because of memory problems, if the opponent is not to be a dumbo then the game must have severe restrictions imposed upon it. A game which is ultra-complex would need about 20K of Artificial Intelligence for the computer to learn and improve enough to keep the challenge to a player. So how about some games which are for humans only, with the computer acting as a rule-book. It would make for more variety in play, would it not? I wish to write a wargame without a computer opponent, in order to make the game as big as possible. What do other readers think? I always find playing humans more fun anyway.

Anthony Bailey, Carshalton, Surrey

Interesting tips for an interesting game. I plan to meet up with some old colleagues from GAMES WORKSHOP *very soon to discuss the availability of the game now that* GW *has pulled out of software production. If the situation warrants it, I'll prepare a full review of the game immediately afterwards. One of the advantages of computer wargaming is the option to play solitaire. Perhaps the best option is the kind used in* Rebelstar *where one side of the tape has a single player option while the other is a two player game.*

SM

Dear Sean
I have got to reply to the stupid letter written by Peter Shields in last month's issue. It annoys me so much that he can be so single minded, and it also surprises me that you should print such trash, or is it that you want to receive a whole lot of angry letters like this, then ask for a pay rise because of all the extra workload? (*It's a fair cop, guv* — **SM**)

Peter Shields seems to want everything arranged for him and has no consideration for other people. Even humble me, who hardly ever reads any of your section or CRASH COURSE can see the usefulness of these to people who play wargames or are parents.

But while I'm here I might as well give you some aggro. Don't worry, it's only a bit of constructive criticism. The main reason for people disregarding your measly three or four pages is the appearance. It is too grey and drab. Why don't you press for a colour page or two, or even a few colour photos. I mean, Derek Brewster did it, why not you?

For instance just take a quick look at last issue and compare the CRASH Smash *Rebel Star* with the CRASH Smash *Bobby Bearing*. You have to agree there is a big difference in colour and razzamatazz.

I think it's time to revolt. The only way to get more readers is to attract them, and if the other slime eaters at the CRASH Tower say you don't have enough readers to warrant spending a little cash, then either kick their feet away or stick your fingers up their noses.

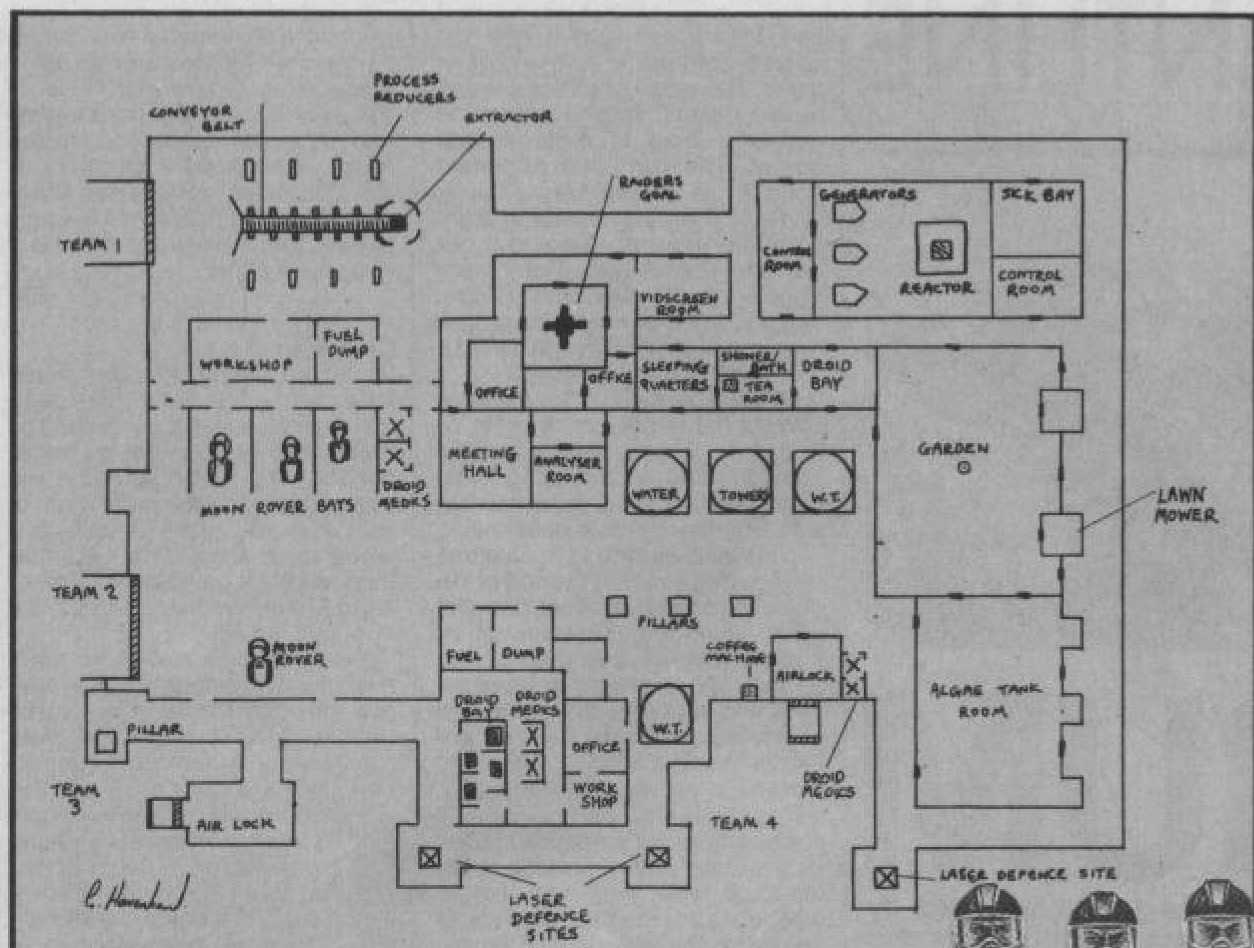
Stuart Bedford, Thornew Wakefield, West Yorkshire

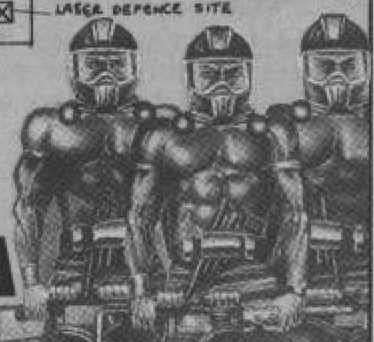
PS Do you really look like Don Johnston of Miami Vice as your portrait by Oli suggests?

Let's make a deal shall we? I won't mention clothes pegs again so long as everybody keeps their mouths shut about that drawing. I've been compared with everybody from Jesus Christ to Don Johnston, and I'm not paid that much! Okay?

As for the presentation of FRONTLINE, it always comes down to what space is available when I get games in to review. If a good game arrives while there's colour space free, nobody minds me grabbing some of it. However, as was the case with Rebelstar, *all the colour had gone. When this occurs, I have a choice. Do I hold the review for a month to ensure colour but risk being late reviewing the game, or do I get the review to you as fast as possible and make do with monochrome pages? I normally plump for the latter option. However, I do hope to brighten these pages over the next few months so stay tuned. The case for the defence rests.*

SM





REBEL STAR— MOONBASE DELTA

Dear Sean
Recently, I bought *Rebel Star* by FIREBIRD, having enjoyed playing *Rebelstar Raiders* by RED SHIFT. At £1.99, it is one of my best ever buys!

However, having played it so thoroughly, I can now beat the computer (on 1 player) every time — even on level 8.

One way to do this is:

1) Move all the Raiders and droids up the left hand side (OUTSIDE THE BASE) to the top airlock, arming them as they go. Use only 1 droid to break through the first blast door and get all your men inside AFTER the droids. Do not blast the inner door yet . . .
2) While doing this, break in with your other group at the bottom of the map and wait for the computer's reaction! Very quickly, nearly all the droids will rush down to attack. Wait inside the airlock and cover the doors. The idea is to distract the defenders, and so hold out to your last man/woman/droid! Do not break in at the top-left until your force is completely wiped out . . .
3) By now, there should be no defending droids left near the top-left airlock; so blast the inner door (only once) and rush your 3 droids across (above the conveyor belt) and towards the thin corridor leading to the computer room. Ignore any attacks — they can take a lot of punishment! Break through the yellow blast door and into the computer rooms. Go straight for the computer and shoot it, ignoring attacks if possible . . .
4) While dashing the droids across, use the men/women from the airlock to cover them. Use the scenery for cover and set up lots of opportunity shots . . .

To make the game more challenging, I have hacked the program to provide the following modifications for the 1-player version. It means that Raiders MUST destroy the 3 laser-computers AND the reactor, as well as the Isaac-computer, to win:
Paul M Baxter, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Your tips are excellent. More of this ilk would not go amiss. For your efforts, you get this month's prize — France.. er sorry, £20 of software. Okay? Good!
SM

Dear Sean
I can't help but write to you complaining about the letter from a Mr Peter Shields of Manchester. He asked whether war/strategy games are worthy of their own regular column in CRASH. I say yes, very much so in fact. I'd rather have a specialised person who knows his job well, giving his criticisms or comments about a wargame, than an arcade freak doing so amongst the other arcade games. I know that wargames don't appeal to everyone; nor are they as widely produced as arcade games (pity though!), but it's just no reason to have their column 'abolished'. Although the column may be bare at times or mightn't have a CRASH Smash every month, it still should exist, after all is CRASH always absolutely packed to the brim with CRASH Smashes every month.

He also said about wargames being far inferior to arcade games. Yes, I admit that too for a majority of them but not so for such games as *Shadowfire, Lords of Midnight* and so on, which were highly acclaimed and got into the CRASH Readers Awards.

Having cleared that up, I'll put forward some of my views on the Forum. I was very glad to see you take over from Angus, as your reviewing system is far better, and I very much liked the idea of the Forum. I think the Forum is just too small, and although space is a limitation it could be enlarged by using up the wasted space that a Mr Minson writes his gobbledigook on (no offence *White Dwarf*!)

Generally wargames on the Spectrum are improving, but agreeing with Steven Cook's point that they are generally slow. For instance in LOTHLORIEN's *The Bulge*, I find that the computer is slow to respond to the order key, etc. Another point I would like to make is that some people were complaining about the *S&S* system being very similar to D&D or AD&D, yet nobody has complained about *HotM* (*Heavy on the Magic*) using the FF books' fighting and requisite system, that of SKILL, STAMINA, AND LUCK?

Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions. What type of wargames, RPG's etc do you like/play?

Is there any news of any other games coming out from J. GOLLOP soon?

Will you be reviewing *Dark Sceptre*? and Do you PBM?
David Kelly, Belfast

Ooh, my head is getting so much bigger! In answer to your questions, Traveller, Skyrealms of Jorune, Call of Cthulhu, Rolemaster, AD&D *are my favourite RPGs in that order, though I play and collect many more. Conventional wargames include SPIs* Starforce Trilogy, Star Fleet Battles, WRG modern miniatures rules, Warhammer *and my favourite game overall is* Go. *Yes I do PBM but the games I play are my business. I never form alliances or make my presence known when it can be avoided. At present it would appear that I'm not reviewing* Dark Sceptre *though that isn't definite.*
SM

Dear Sean
I have long held the opinion that people who dismiss wargaming and RPGs as boring must be unintelligent and/or unimaginative. Peter Shields sounds like one of this cursed kind. He sounds as if he cannot enjoy computer games unless half the universe is destroyed by him in the first five seconds.

I am not knocking Arcade games indeed I enjoy a good many, but I do like to have some measure of intelligence in my games, I am happy to set a new house best at *Quazatron*, but much more enjoyed winning *Arnhem* against the computer.

Point 2: *Swords & Sorcery* can not be a true RPG because you can not use the standard Role play technique of lying your way out of trouble. An example of this follows:

In one game a friend and I were caught searching the baggage carriage of a circus train. Two guards came in . . . in a computer game we would have had to get into a dangerous fight and kill them to stop them sounding the alarm.

In the RPG we explained we were the flying Karamazor Brothers, and were checking over trapezes for that night's performance. Computer games just cannot handle the aspects of a) conversation and b) all the natural laws such as gravity.
Ian Hopping, Weston, Herts.

I agree that current computers cannot possibly ever create a true RPG. The point is that computerised RPG development isn't being carried out on Crays. It's being handled on machines of comparable power to the Spectrum. It will have a very important role to play in the future of home entertainment as games become ever more realistic. Role playing is the most sophisticated form of leisure invented by man. Its birth in the home computer field (which will expand) is surely worthy of coverage.

Finally, this closes the case for FRONTLINE. Peter Shields' opinion was not backed up by any of the correspondents. In fact, I've never had such an enthusiastic response to the column. Thank you to everyone who wrote. I guess it was the acid test. FRONTLINE will continue to grow and improve while I'm writing it. As a famous Vulcan once said, 'Live long, and prosper!'
SM

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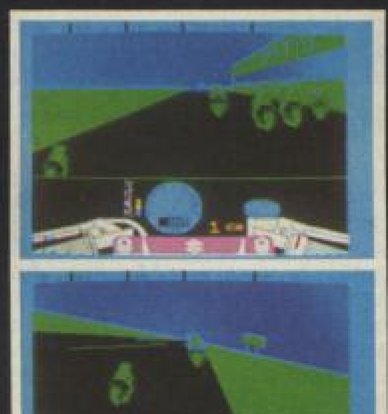
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Dear Comps Minion
I find your competitions far too difficult. I mean, all this artistic stuff we have to do, and me not being artistic in the slightest. It's not fair!
Yours with love,
Albert Postlethwaite

Dear Albert
Sorry my comps are too hard for you, so here is a one off, special like, just for you. All you have to do is join the dots that the nice ART Department has drawn to make a mystery picture. Once you've done that colour it in to the best of your ability. Use all your favourite colours — combined with your imagination, and a bit of artistic license. Who knows, maybe you will win.
Yours with love, Comps Minion

Crash Competition



Anyone else who fancies a go is most welcome. We've got fifty copies of ELITE's latest Smash, *Scooby Doo*, to give away to the people we think make the best use of their colouring set — we're not looking for Picassos, Monets or even Oliver Freys. Just good old fashioned colourer-inners. When you've coloured in the picture post it off to:

Scooby Doo Colouring Comp, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Entries must be in by 23rd October. Get to work and you could win a copy of the game in this special, easy-to-enter colouring comp. (Minimal artistic abilities needed!) Happy colouring!

1986 PBM MAILBOX



This month our play by mail expert fights for and wins two pages — it's PBM FORUM time again! Brendon also takes a peek at Amateur PBM games, looks at CONQUEST and gets on the touchline for a new league in SOCCER STAR

AMATEUR PBM GAMES

Amateur games are of a breed that I have avoided mentioning, mainly because they tend to be human moderated games of a simple nature. These games are generally run by PBM fanatics with a little spare time and money.

The principal of amateur gaming is the same as in 'professional' PBM, which after all, developed from amateur PBM — the only difference is that the results of all the players' orders are published together in a 'zine (normally in the form of a table of figures for the players to interpret). These games are very cheap to play — the only charges being a couple of pounds startup and a few more pounds for a 'zine subscription. Turnaround varies from every three weeks to every two months, depending upon the 'zine.

If you are interested in playing any of the variety of amateur PBM games available (many of them derived from board games such as *Diplomacy, Sopwith* and *Railway Rivals*), or if you would like any further information about amateur gaming, then I suggest that you send an SAE to **Martin Le Fevre, 1 Wellesley Nautical School, Lyth, Northumberland NE24 3PF** along with a letter asking him for details of the amateur PBM game directory which he edits.

And Lloyd has passed a letter from **David** and **Michael Bradley** on to me — they've got three games on offer: a cowboy game, a football game and a space game which are apparently free to play so long as you send SAEs along with your turnsheets. The games are meant for beginners and people who want to play by mail in a simple way, so if you're interested, send a SAE to David and Michael at **17 Temple Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1XS** for details.

SOCCER STAR

***Soccer Star* is the first PBM game to be released by PACE GAMES SOFTWARE** of Nottingham. As this is a new game, a fair appraisal cannot be given so all that can be said is that *Soccer Star* appears to be a fairly detailed professional PBM game of Football Management.

The game offers a league structure, player skill ratings (ranging from Park Player to World Class), team selections, player transfers, weekly matches, aggression factors (defining how your team plays!), game attendance figures, financial management, professional cheating and so on . . . All in a day's work for your average Bobby Charlton!

Soccer Star is due to be launched this month, costing £3 to start up, with game costs of £1.25 per turn (which can be as often as weekly if you wish). Send an SAE for further details to **CRASH Soccer Star, PACE GAMES SOFTWARE, 164 Abbotsford Drive, St Amms, Nottingham NG3 1NE.**

CONQUEST

Conquest is a human moderated game of, well, conquest. The land of Rall upon which the game is played is mapped out onto well over 10 A4 sheets, each sheet containing 29 hexes of land and sea. Initially, the player is given a nation compromising of a few hexes, and is told the type of nation ruled, the 'Personalities' owned, the nation's religious and magical tendencies and troop strengths, along with information regarding the hexes and cities governed. The player is also given a copy of the (somewhat daunting) rulebook.

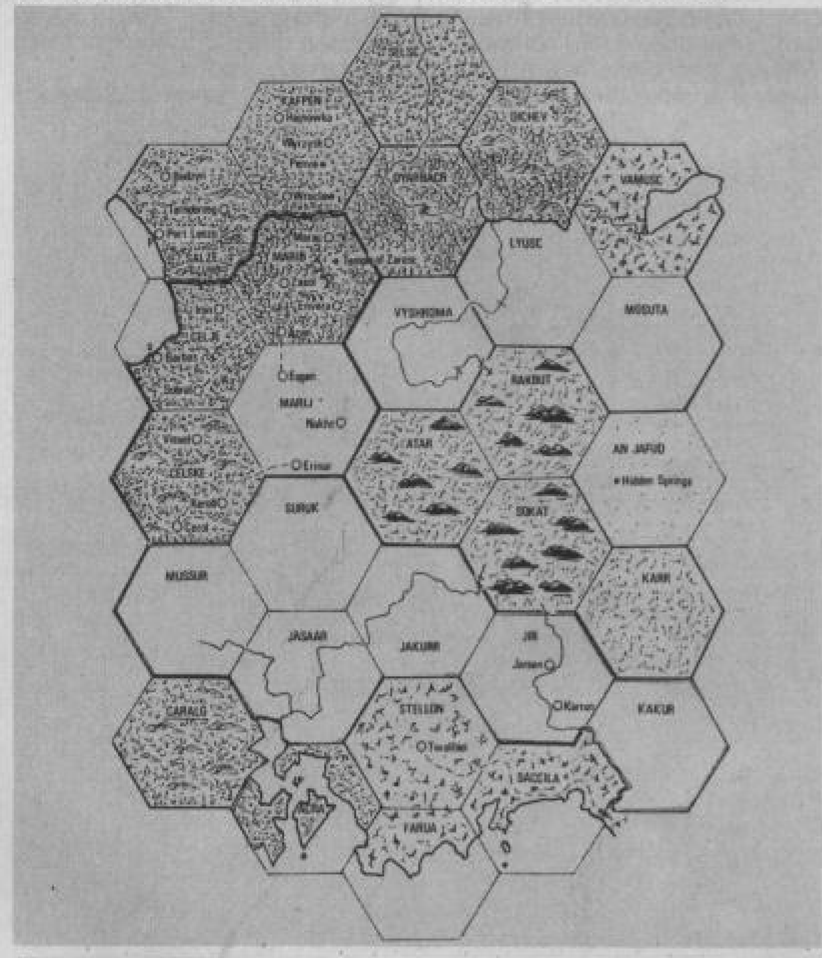
The main nation types are: barbarian; nomad; superior barbarian and civilised. Each type of nation has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, a superior barbarian nation can raise civilian population at 80% of the normal economic costs, while its prosperity is low compared to that of a civilised nation.

The personalities are the leaders of nations and armies, and they are used by the players to actually 'do' things in the game — conducting spying or espionage missions, trading and so on. Normally the player has about 10 personalities, but this figure can vary. They all have 'Dungeons and Dragons' style attributes which give different Personalities different uses.

Nations' troops generally come under two headings: INFANTRY archers and marines for instance, and CAVALRY which may comprise chariots, elephants and so on. The nation type and geographical description decides the troop type of the nation. Fleets of ships such as galleys and coastal raiders are available for maritime battles.

Combat in *Conquest* is a well thought out affair — victory does not necessarily go to the largest force!

The player's hexes and cities ar termed PROVINCES. In the provinces, loyalty-crushing taxes can be enforced to raise the gold needed for economic development and investment in infrastructure and armies. Economics is the strongest feature of *Conquest*, and international trade is an important key to successful play.



A map from CONQUEST in which the aim of the game is . . . conquest!

CONCLUSION

Conquest is a well run game which requires a lot of careful planning and diplomacy to win. The game is quite difficult to understand at first, but after a few months play and a bit of diplomacy with experienced players you should get used to the game. A word of warning if you choose to join: don't expect the world to be easy!

Conquest is played on a monthly turnaround and each turn costs only £1. Startup costs £3, and as a special offer to CRASH readers this fee includes an extra free turn not normally included in the startup package (rulebook and first turn free). **Matthew Brunt**, who GMs *Conquest*, also produces an informative game newsletter called THE CONQUEROR — well worth reading and why not contribute articles too?

If you would like to play *Conquest* then send a cheque/postal order payable to M Brunt for £3 to: **CRASH CONQUEST STARTUP, CONQUEST GAMES, The Firs, Wig Lane, Boxted, Nr Colchester, Essex.**

PBM FORUM

TURNS AND ADVERTS

Dear Brendon
My interest is PBMing has grown immensely since your column started a few months ago. However, there are a few things about the hobby that I do not fully understand. When you use the phrase 'a turn', what does a turn comprise? When a turn costs over £1 then surely it is more than, say, "I will unlock the door to my left" — or does a player go into greater depths to describe a list of activities?

Secondly, whilst reading WHITE DWARF magazine I came across several adverts for PBM games. One that caught my eye was for a game called *Capitol* by KJC GAMES. The advert reads '*Capitol* is fast becoming the standard against which other space warfare games are compared'. The advert includes other comment praising the game no end.

I read your review of *Starglobe* in CRASH 32 and found it interesting; I even thought of joining the game. But I then noticed that *Capitol*'s turn prices are cheaper and the game sounds as exciting and as playable as *Starglobe*. Could you, if possible, advise me as to which game is the most suited for me — a gamer with a little PBM experience.

Steven Vickers, Carshalton, Surrey

Depending upon the game in question, one can do a number of actions during any one turn — as illustrated by the Starglobe *action sheet seen on this page.*

Starglobe and Capitol are difficult games to compare: they are both good games but they are very different to play. Capitol requires a lot of diplomacy and strategy if you wish to enjoy the game, while Starglobe just requires a bit of imagination and perseverance — diplomacy and strategy help, but they're non-essential to enjoy the game. Capitol was discussed last month — I suggest that you reread what I wrote then before you decide which game (if any) to join. Bear in mind, however, that there are some hidden charges to Capitol . . .

BK

A typical STARGLOBE action sheet illustrating a range of options available to a player when preparing a turn

```
ACTION SHEET - (Starflight) - FILL IN AND RETURN
Game account number 220 StarGlobe Three
B Kavanagh
Summerfield Farm
Nantwich Road
Broxton
Nr CHESTER CH3 9JH
Credit balance BEFORE today's report(s)   1.20 Status Standard
Starship number 61
Named The Getaway Captain De Burgh in command
Actions possible in starflight.   These orders dated 26/8/86

EITHER
Home on star named MONDE, on arrival orbit planet named:  (Give NAME, number will not do) Homeworld
OR
Fly through star named __________ with acceleration on/off/reverse
and after close fly-by head in direction of star ____________ planet named ____________
OR (For advanced players only)
Reset thrust commands.
Give up to 3 periods of acceleration.
State acceleration vector, x,y,z and number of ship years.
Null vector (0,0,0,years) for engines off.
x= ______ y= ______ z= ______ years= ______
X= ______ Y= ______ Z= ______ years= ______   (Intention is to fly to star ___________ )
x= ______ y= ______ z= ______ years= ______

Please send information module on:- ______________________

Broadcast one local message (audible up to 10 light years without special receiving equipment):-
  Hi there. Captain De Burgh humbly hopes that you all read
      the PBM MAILBOX in CRASH. If not, then why not!?

Request information on a ship/star system/set of game entities

   Request information on the activities of the
        Pirate ship   Darkstar
Give an order to the ships company
   Ships officers' dance lessons are to continue. Any officers who claim
   they can already dance are to give a demonstration of their talents
Send a message to MONDE     to ships crew. Prizes to be awarded to worst three officers.
 Oh Great PRICR.               Crewman Dainty will award the honours!
 have you any Quests?
Viewscreen range 18 (15), magnification 2 (1)
Alert status is on automatic, Order special alert status Red Alert
Post to-
Time Patterns                              021 523 4446
97 Devonshire Road
Handsworth
Birmingham B20 2PG
```

FULL TIME PBM . . .

Dear Brendon
Being something of a PBM fanatic I'm really pleased to see the growing interest in the hobby initiated bt CRASH. I play *Vorcon Wars* (games 35, 43, and 53), *Super Vorcon 68, Starglobe Three, Spiral Arm 2, Where Lies The Power, World Of Vengeance, Saturnalia, It's A Crime!, Explorers of Orion* and *Whitegold*. I've also played *Starmaster, Starweb, Starlord* and *First Light*. If anyone would like to get in touch with me then I would be pleased to pass on my views of these games (SAE please!)

As for PBM football, I suggest writing to **Ray Norton at 75 Bristol Drive, Battle Hill, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 9RG** who is starting a new *United* league.

Phil Shuking, 58 Hampstead Road, Dorking RH4 3AH

Playing all those games, I'm surprised (yet grateful) that you found time to write in! I'm also in Super Vorcon 68 — perhaps an alliance is in order!?

BK

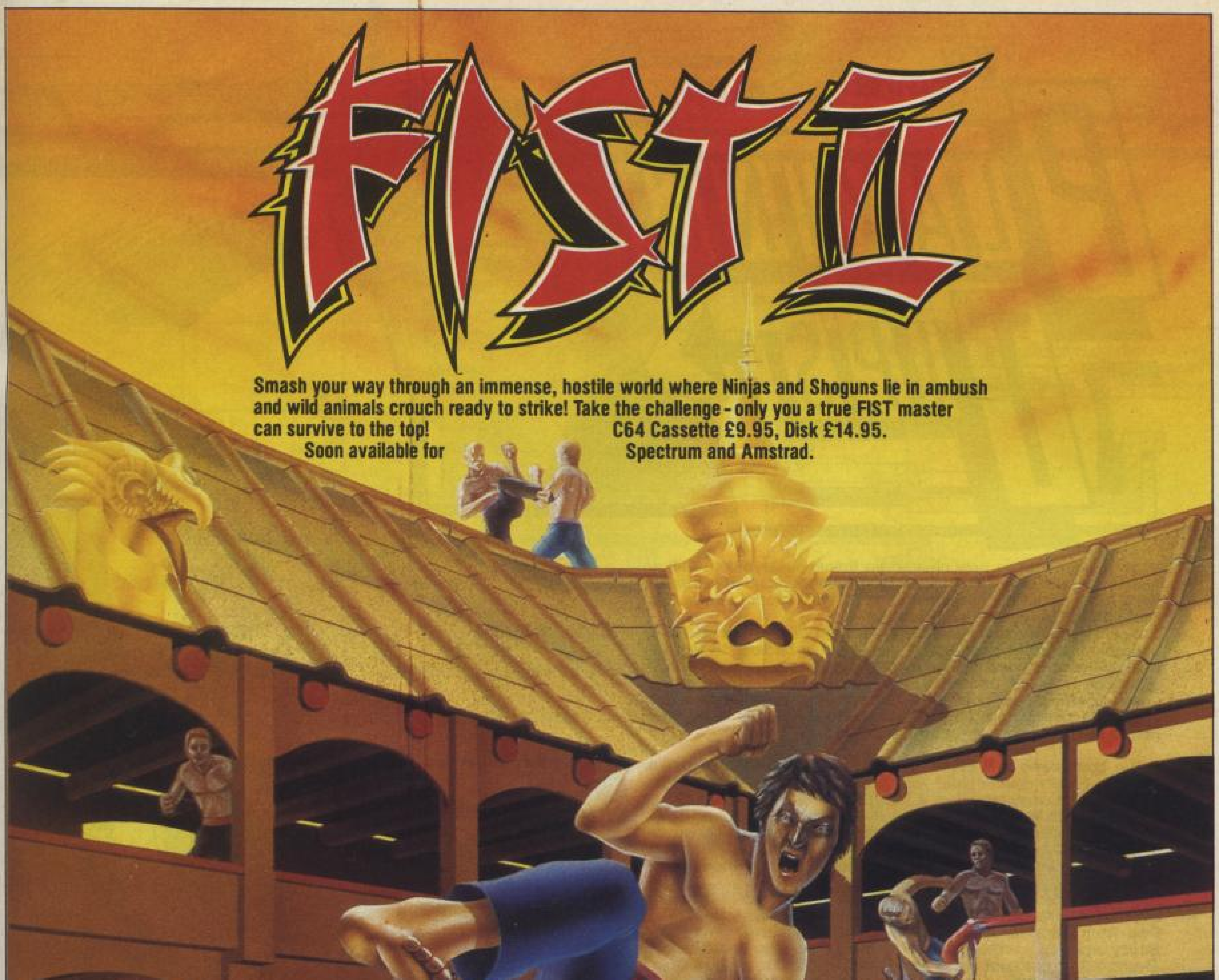
BUDGETING BEGINNERS

Dear Brendon
I read your column with great interest. Not playing any PBM games myself, I would like to know if there are any low budget games suitable for beginners — and, if possible, the addresses and prices. I would greatly appreciate this.

Michael Pacey, Gorebridge, Midlothian

In my view (and according to the FLAGSHIP Factors), Vorcon Wars is the best value 'low budget' game available — see CRASH 30 for further details. Conquest is another good low budget game — see this month's game overview.

BK


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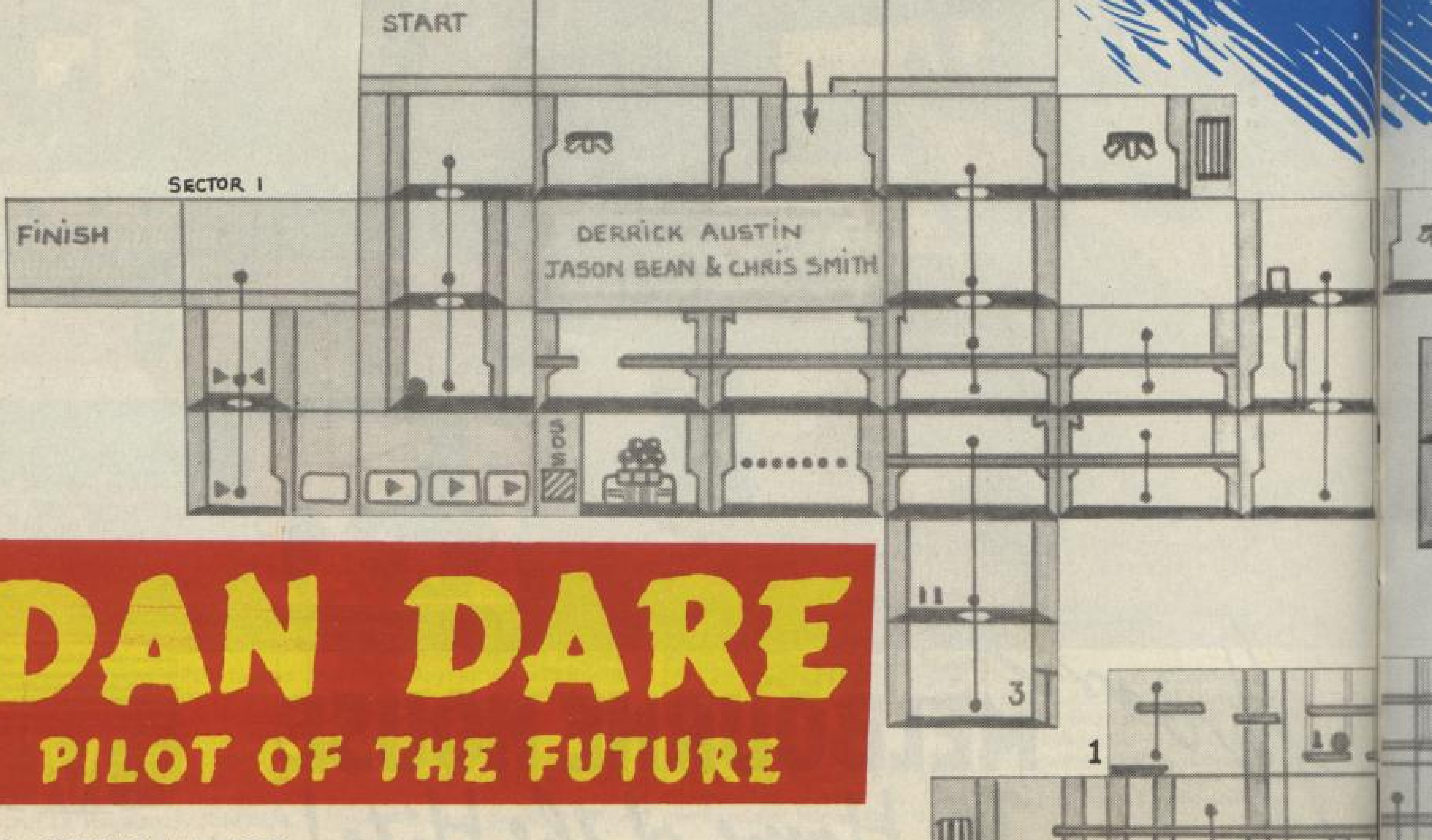


Luckily, my cold has now cleared up thankyouverymuch. Still no word from that Ravenflame pseudonym — although I did read a scathing letter about me in the pages of C&VG a month or two ago. Probably written by their staff writer.

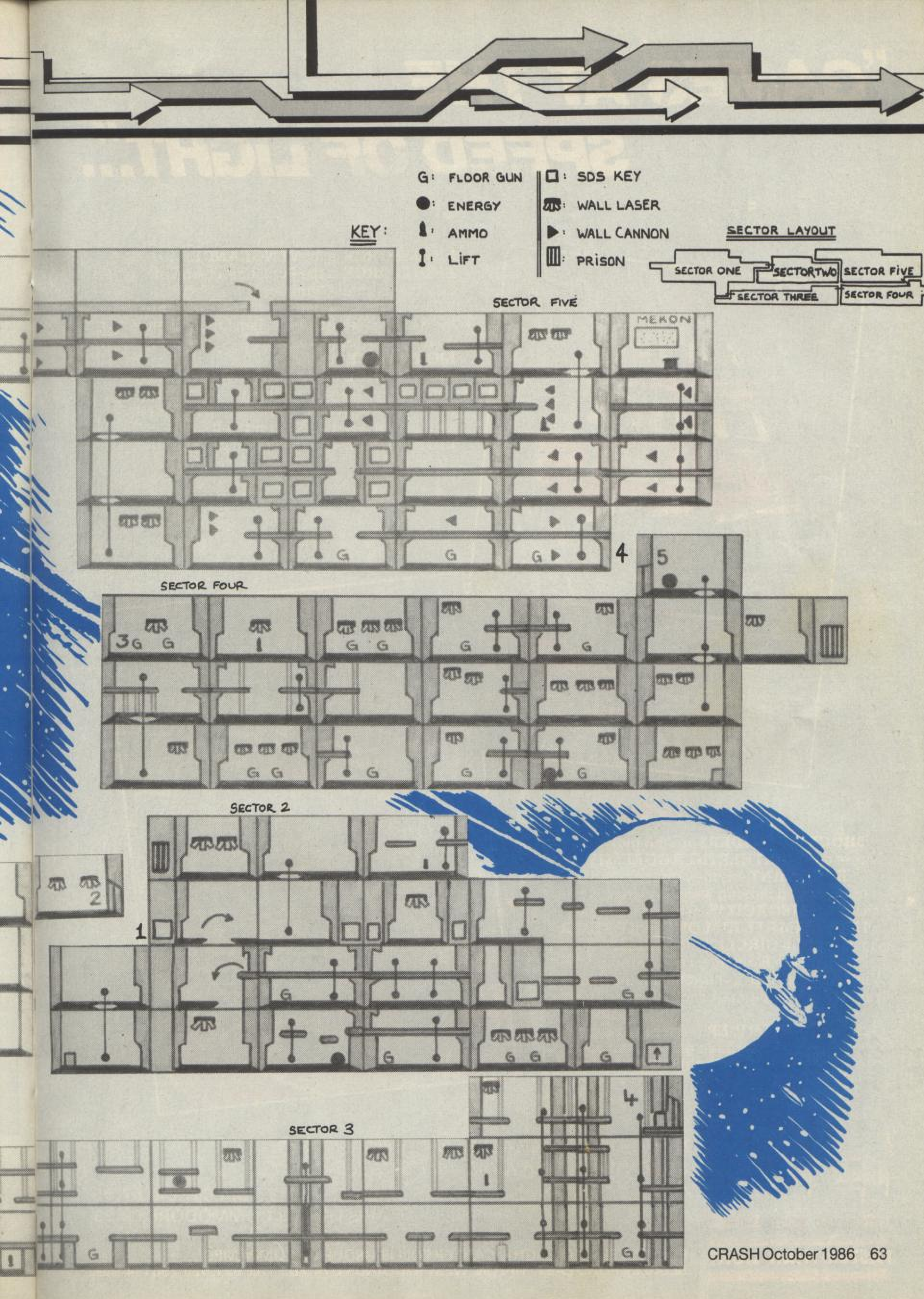
Sigh. I don't feel as if I've had any summer this year at all. We've probably had all of three sunny days here in Ludlow. In fact the nearest I've got to jetting off to exotic, pale-sanded beaches was an afternoon spent at Birmingham airport watching everyone else zooming off on their hols. What fun, eh? Anyway, enough of this waffle (I expect you've all had your summer holidays in far flung places already) and on with the tips!

The good news this month is that there are two Top Tipsters because I really couldn't make my mind up who most deserved the title. The bad news however, is that you'll only be receiving £10 of Software each. We do run on extremely tight budgets here you know. These two lucky people are Paul Phillipson-Masters from Thornbury in Bristol for his *Equinox* Tips and Chris Smith and Jason Bean (The Industrious Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington) for their POKEs on *Stainless Steel* and *Split Personalities*.

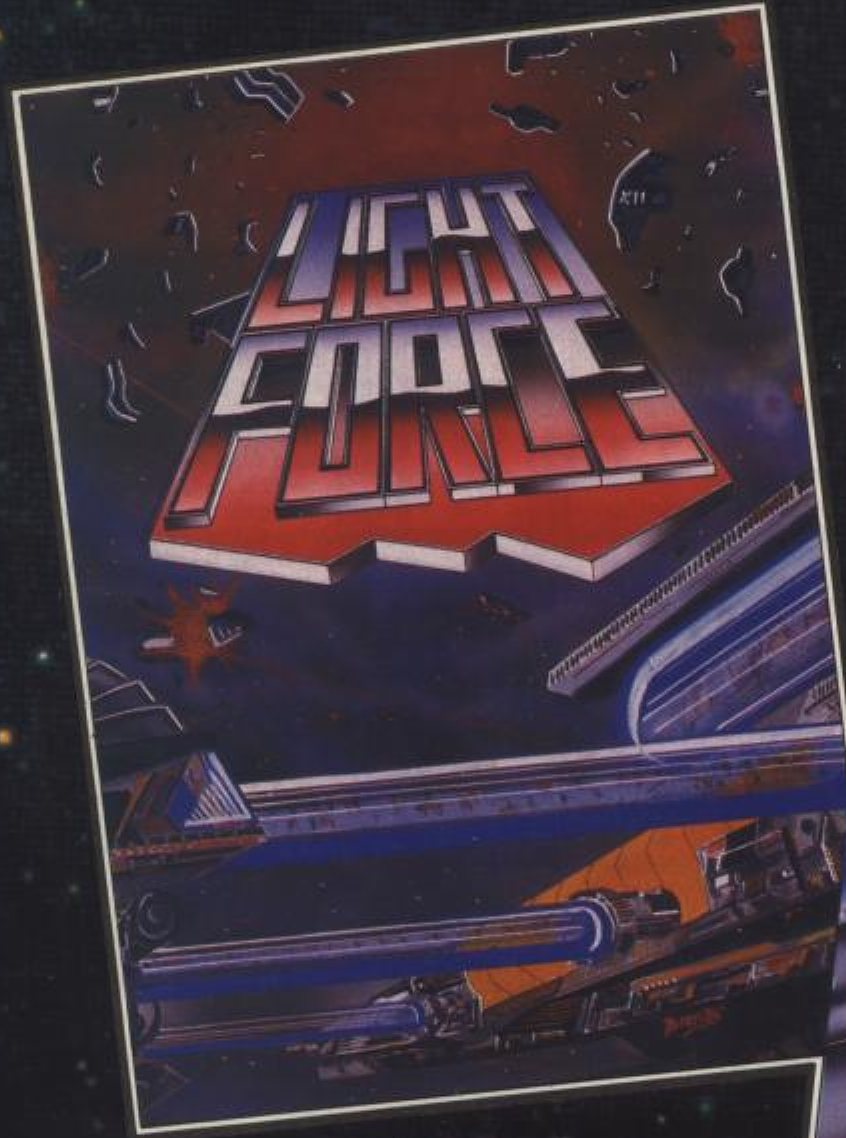
Cartographer of the month is Gary Orgen for his map of *Dynamite Dan II*. Other mappers this month who deserve credit are Howard Dean from Littleover in Derby for his *Cauldrón II* map, *Ian Hunt* from Purley supplied another part of the huge Core map and *Christian Morris* from Luton sent in one of the first Universal Hero maps. Quick work there, indeed . . .



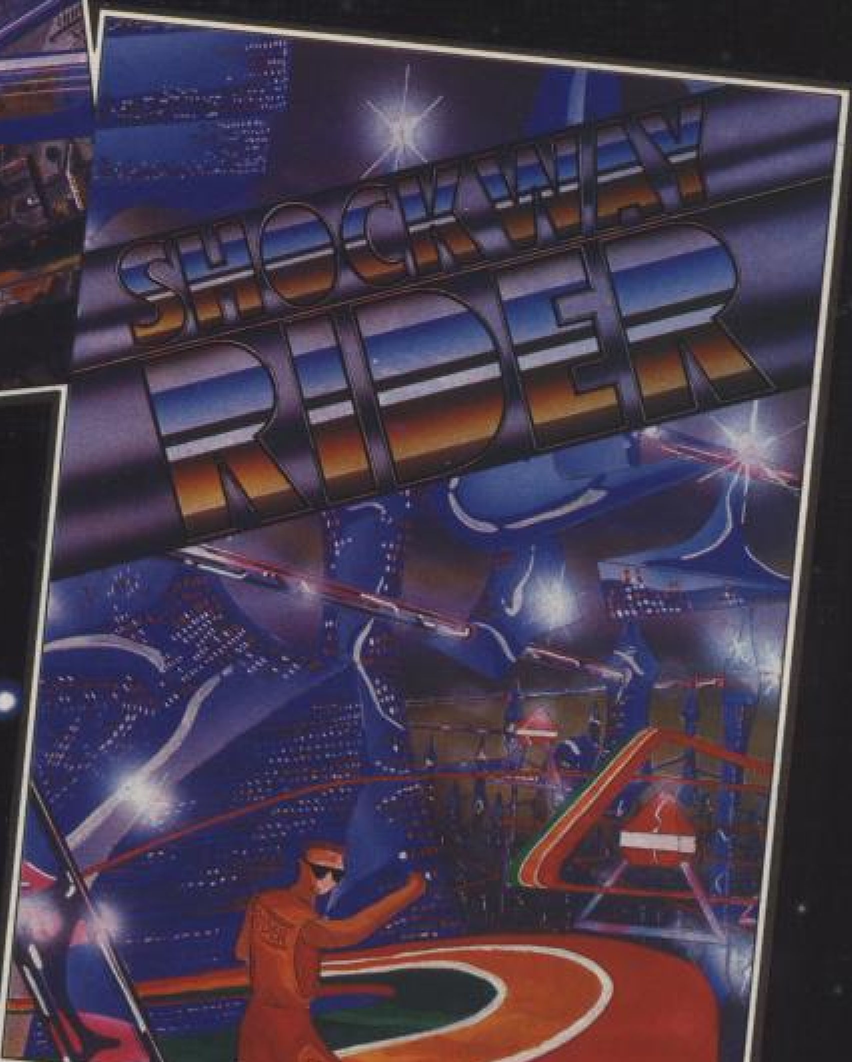
DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE


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G: FLOOR GUN
●: ENERGY
AMMO
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SDS KEY
WALL LASER
WALL CANNON
PRISON
SECTOR LAYOUT
SECTOR ONE
SECTORTWO
SECTOR FIVE
SECTOR THREE
SECTOR FOUR
SECTOR FIVE
MEKON
4
5
SECTOR FOUR
3
SECTOR 2
2
1
SECTOR 3
4

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First things first. To be a proper Girlie Tipster you need a hair-drier and mirror in the office, just to make sure you look your best. Hannah gets ready to meet her public — but where's Melissa? Powdering that huge conk, no doubt . . .

STAINLESS STEEL.

Gosh, no sooner had we all sat down to try and get Ricky Steel through the various perils that await him in *Stainless Steel* when these POKEs arrived from the incredibly studious Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington. Chris Smith and Jason Bean have devised a way to get infinite fuel, infinite lives and infinite shields for Ricky and his car. This means that Ricky can never die and can continue in the game until it is finished. Gollee.

```
5 REM C SMITH AND J BEAN
10 REM STAINLESS STEEL
POKES
20 RESTORE
30 LET TOT = 0
40 LET WEIGHT = 1
50 FOR i = 32768 TO 32814
60 READ a: LET TOT =
TOT+WEIGHT*a
70 POKE i,a: LET WEIGHT =
WEIGHT+1
80 NEXT i
90 IF TOT<>125222 THEN
PRINT "ERROR IN DATA":
BEEP 1,1:STOP
100 CLEAR 24899
110 PRINT = 1; AT 1,3; "START
STAINLESS STEEL TAPE"
120 LOAD "CODE
130 POKE 60632,3240
140 POKE 60633,255
150 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
1000 DATA 33,128,1,33
1010 DATA 0,17,228,236,237
1020 DATA 176,195,213,236,175
1030 DATA 50,15,190,50,16
1040 DATA 190,50,17,190,33
1050 DATA 0,0,34,98,187
1060 DATA 50,100,187,34,132
1070 DATA 187,50,134,187,62
1080 DATA 195,50,103,183,195
1090 DATA 68,97
```

STAINLESS STEEL CHEAT MODES

Apart from having a program for infinite everything, *Stainless Steel* has several cheat keys which do more or less the same thing. Phil Churchyard discovered that by typing LOIS once the game has started gives you infinite lives. Richard Drew from Tyne and Wear wrote to say that once the game has begun, hold down the following keys before you loose any lives: S T A I N L Z X You will now have an infinite number of lives and be able to use your shields as many times as you like. Typing S I L K all together at the start of the game does the same thing, as William Mitchell from Banffshire in Scotland soon discovered, while Jason Kitchen reckons that if you press keys Q A J K L I O P and ENTER all at once when the game has loaded then you get infinite lives, and by pressing your shield key you get lots of shields as well. Now isn't that jolly?

HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

Infinite Stamina

Lots of people seem to have cracked at least one of the exits in GARGOYLE's *Heavy on the Magick*. If anyone's still having a few problems with keeping Axil alive, then here's some useful POKEs from David McCandless. Type in the routine and then RUN as usual and when the game has loaded you will notice that when Axil's stamina level reaches zero he doesn't die! This is very useful when BLASTING monsters who have much higher ratings then you do.

```
5 REM Heavy on the Magick
10 PAPER 0: INK 7: BORDER 0:
CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 10,10; "START
TAPE"
30 LOAD " " CODE
40 PRINT AT 10,10; "STOP
TAPE"
50 LET t = 0
60 FOR i = 23296 TO 23431
70 READ a: POKE i,a: LET t =
t+a: NEXT i
80 IF t<> 16474 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA": STOP
90 CLS: PRINT AT 10,10; "RE
START TAPE"
100 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
110 DATA 33,86,5,17,0,254,1,176
120 DATA
0,237,176,33,145,254,34,23
130 DATA
254,34,60,254,34,70,254,34
140 DATA
142,254,33,141,254,34,38,254
150 DATA
34,45,254,34,117,254,33,116
160 DATA
254,34,128,254,62,206,50,113
170 DATA
254,62,220,50,121,254,62,205
180 DATA
50,126,254,62,203,50,80,254
190 DATA
33,230,248,34,74,254,33,84,91
200 DATA
17,175,254,1,52,0,237,176
210 DATA
195,175,254,49,255,221,33
220 DATA
32,56,17,224,191,62,153,55
230 DATA
205,0,254,33,205,254,17,0
240 DATA
64,1,22,0,237,176,195,0,64
250 DATA
33,255,247,17,255,255,1,0
260 DATA
165,237,184,62,24,50,198,129
270 DATA 49,35,94,195,35,94,0
```

SPLIT PERSONALITIES
Infinite Lives

This should come in handy for all those people who haven't yet had the privilege of seeing Prince Andrew and Fergie together; who can't piece together Mick Jagger, and have no idea who's picture is anonymously assembled at the very end of the game. Those Formidable Hackers from Haxby (and Pocklington), Chris Smith and Jason Bean have come up with an Infinite Lives routine for *Split Personalities, the* DOMARK *game which started life as Splitting Images* and had to re-christened. Simply type in and RUN before starting your *Split Personalities* tape and you can romp through the game forever without having to start again when you die.

```
30 CLEAR 40000
40 RESTORE
50 LET TOT = 0
60 LET WEIGHT = 1
70 FOR i = 50000 TO 50079
80 READ a: LET TOT = TOT +
weight*a
90 POKE i,a: LET weight =
weight + 1
100 NEXT i
110 IF TOT<>382902 THEN
PRINT "error in data": BEEP 1,1:
STOP
120 PRINT = 1; AT 1,3; "START
SPLIT PERSONALITIES TAPE"
130 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 62,255,55,221,33
1010 DATA 203,92,17,223,2
1020 DATA 205,86,5,48,241
1030 DATA 175,50,27,94,33
1040 DATA 0,0,34,28,94
1050 DATA 49,250,255,33,218
1060 DATA 255,229,33,208,191
1070 DATA 34,64,94,62,195
1080 DATA 50,66,94,33,137
1090 DATA 195,17,218,255,1
1100 DATA 23,0,237,176,195
1120 DATA 34,127,212,34,129
1130 DATA 212,33,160,212,34
1140 DATA 140,212,62,195,50
1150 DATA 139,212,195,170,209
```

SPINDIZZY CHEAT

I'm sure you all know by now that Phil Churchyard wrote *Spindizzy* for the Spectrum. He cleverly incorporated a cheat mode in the game. If you press keys PAT (Phil's initials) once the game has loaded then you get infinite time. Good eh?

PYRACURSE TIPS

As promised, here's the rest of the tips on *Pyracurse* as supplied by M J Brock from Peterborough. Last month I told you how to get through the Antechamber and the Shrine. This issue there's the solution to get you into the Sanctum and on to finish the game.

THE SANCTUM

This is naturally the hardest section. Go straight ahead to find a key guarded by a new type of droid which is very nifty on it's casters. Lure this droid away. Pick up the key with Professor and exit up and left to a sealed compound. Open the door by using the key/key plate. Inside you will find a static headless guardian and a spinning globe. This globe is not a weapon. Pick it up with O'Donnell and the guardian will follow him. Lead this guardian into the new sort of droid which you have just found and he will kill up to a certain number of them and then disappear. Lead all the characters left and down to an entrance guarded by a "slow" droid.

Follow downwards to find a crystal guarded by three droids. By using the "lure" method manipulate O'Donnell to pick up this crystal and escape. Return to this entrance.

Exit the Professor and O'Donnell right and downwards to a compound containing a key and another crystal. Lead O'Donnell in to pick up the key and the crystal. Both inner and outer doors will now close and droids will be activated to pursue and kill. Use the Professor to open the inner door by use of a lever found on the outside.

Using O'Donnell, manipulate key in and around the key plate to gain escape with the second crystal. Exit both characters down and to the right to find a door guarded by a fast droid. By "lure" method get the Professor safely inside using the key/key plate.

Here you will find five spinning globe weapons to be picked up by the Professor and O'Donnell. Return to the other characters. Lead all four characters up and left to find a door guarded by two skulls. Pass the characters through safely as the skulls rise. Here you will find a static skull guarding a compound. Putting Frosbie over the skull removes the compound.

Lead O'Donnell through and right past skulls to pick up prism (facing up). Lead Professor, (having picked up emblem) into the room on the right guarded by skulls. Touch the pulsator with the emblem. This produces a spherical ball. Pick this up. Lead the Professor out and you will see the lever on the right which releases O'Donnell.

Before O'Donnell leaves make him him touch the prism on the floor with the one he already has in his possession. This produces three fast droids but also drops the door back into the main compound.

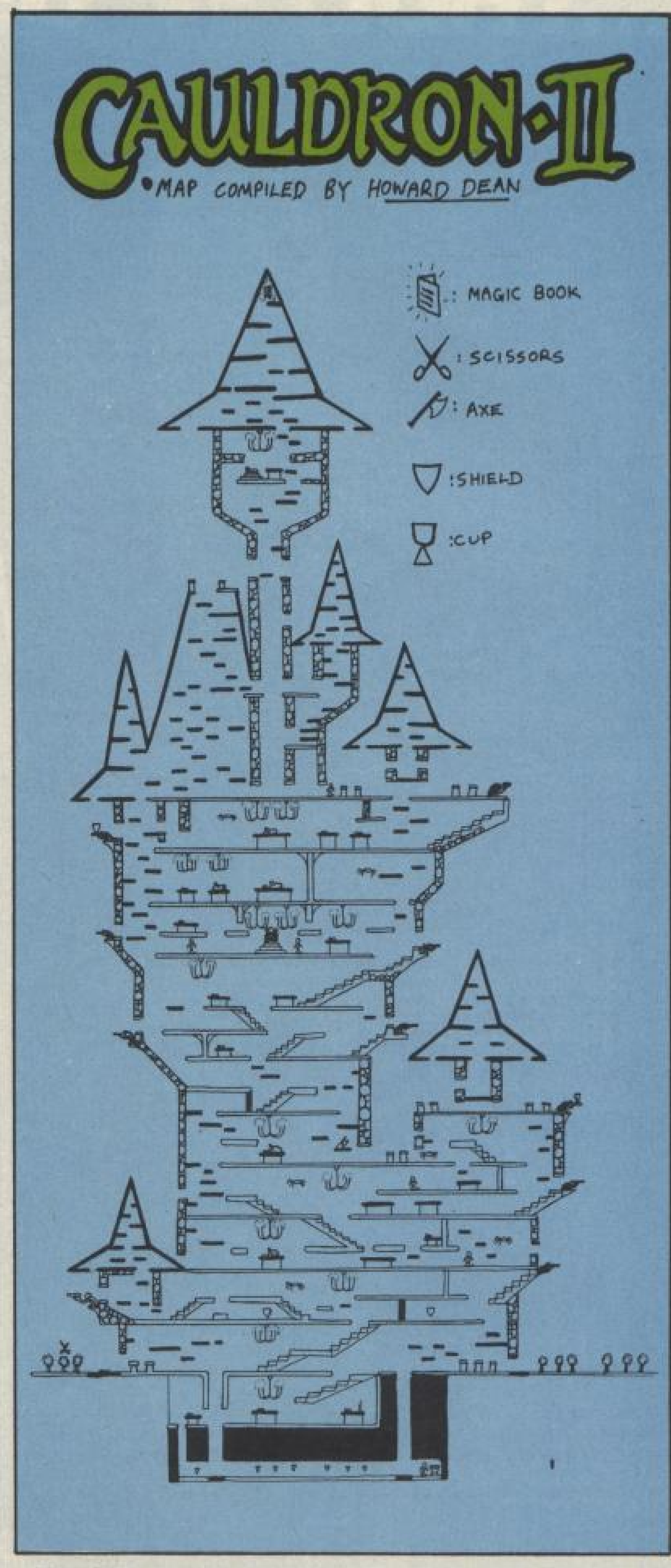
The Professor, possessing the globe, can now lead the activated droid in the main area to the prism on the left which drops the door into the final room. The Professor touches the prism in here to reveal the third crystal.

To find the fourth crystal, lead the Professor back to the area containing the lever just used to release O'Donnell. Here you will find two keys. Lead O'Donnell to area adjacent to find a moving droid guarding a key and a transmitter. Bring these to the Professor. Lead O'Donnell to take the transmitter and the key. The droid is now activated. Using the Professor and nearby key plates release O'Donnell. Ignore first room. Activating this droid simply produces enemies. Lead O'Donnell into the second room, taking the two transmitters. Touching the droid with the first transmitter activates it. Touching the droid with the second transmitter reveals a third transmitter.

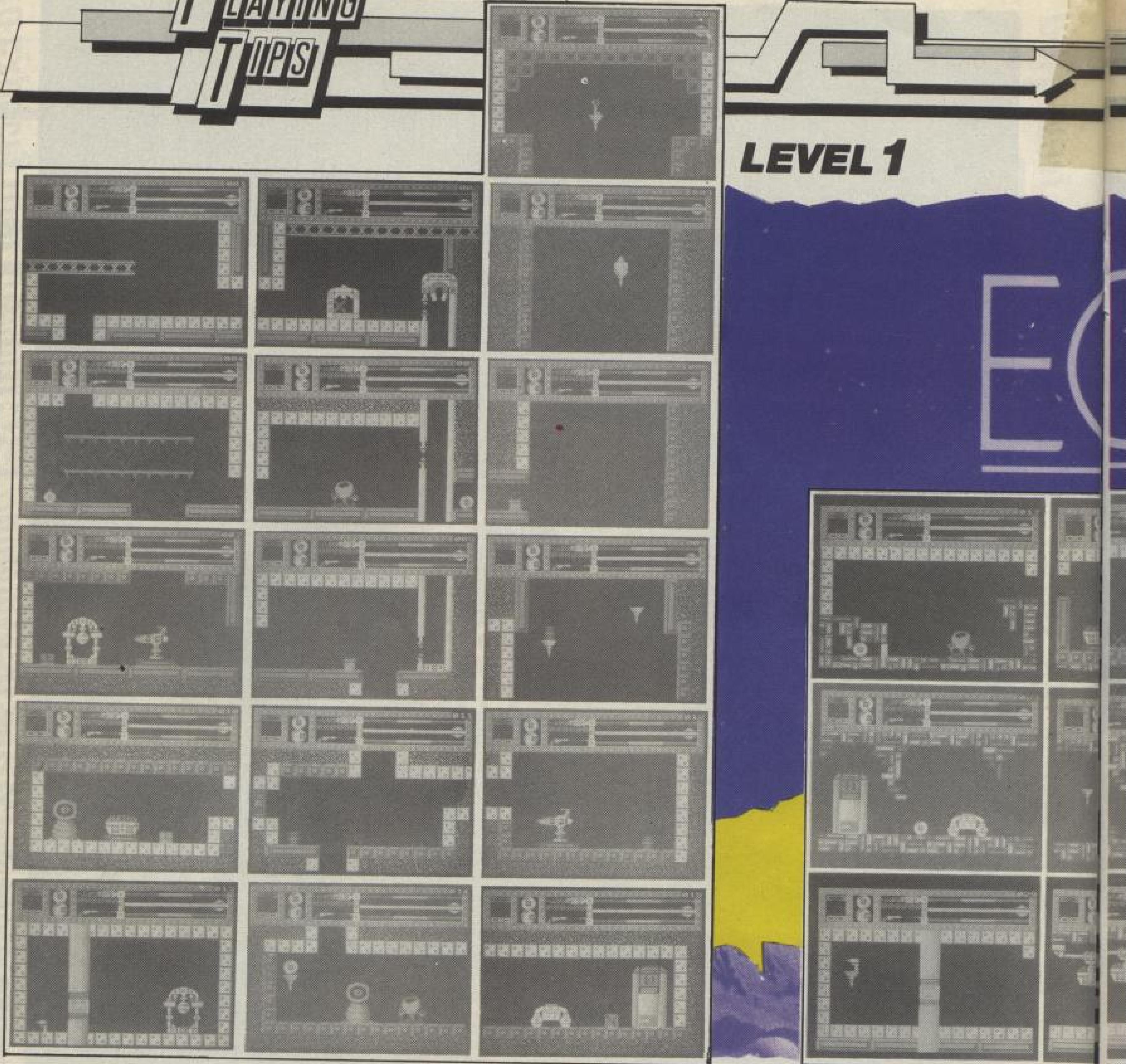
Using key/key plate with the Professor, gain entry to the last room. Touch the droid in the third room with the third transmitter to reveal the fourth and final crystal. Lead all the characters safely to the final set of locations which are to the right.

FINAL GAMEPLAY

Find the three corridors. One leads to a cup and a sphere. Pick up both. The cup is the final cup which revives Pericles. One corridor leads to a transmitter guarded by four fast droids. Safely pick the transmitter up. Lead Daphne, the Professor and O'Donnell down this last corridor past moving slow droids to find a door patrolled by a slow droid. Using the Professor, touch this droid with the transmitter to lower the door. Go through, dodging a scorpion to find a skull guarding an entrance. Pass through as the skull rises to find a room containing four static headless guardians and a static crystal end a lever which is down. Lead all three characters safely into this room.



The four crystals already found, when placed in the correct order on the static crystal on the floor, cause the lever to turn up. Unfortunately, as each crystal is placed correctly one of the headless guardians comes to life. A safe method is to activate two guardians and lure them down the corridor with O'Donnell. Activate two more guardians and lure them down the corridor with Daphne. The Professor can then pick up the final cup and pull the lever down which drops the walls giving access to the final room. Here the remains of Sir Pericles are guarded by a large assortment of previously encountered foes. Dodge these and reincarnate Pericles by using the Professor and the last cup and voila, you have finished the game!.



DYNAMITE DAN II (MINI TIPS)

Here are some bijou mini tips for *Dynamite Dan II* as sent in by Paul Mathews **from Watford.** They go very nicely with the map which Ian has very kindly been working on "up in Art" with the help of Gary Orgen who sent the map in to me.

Island One

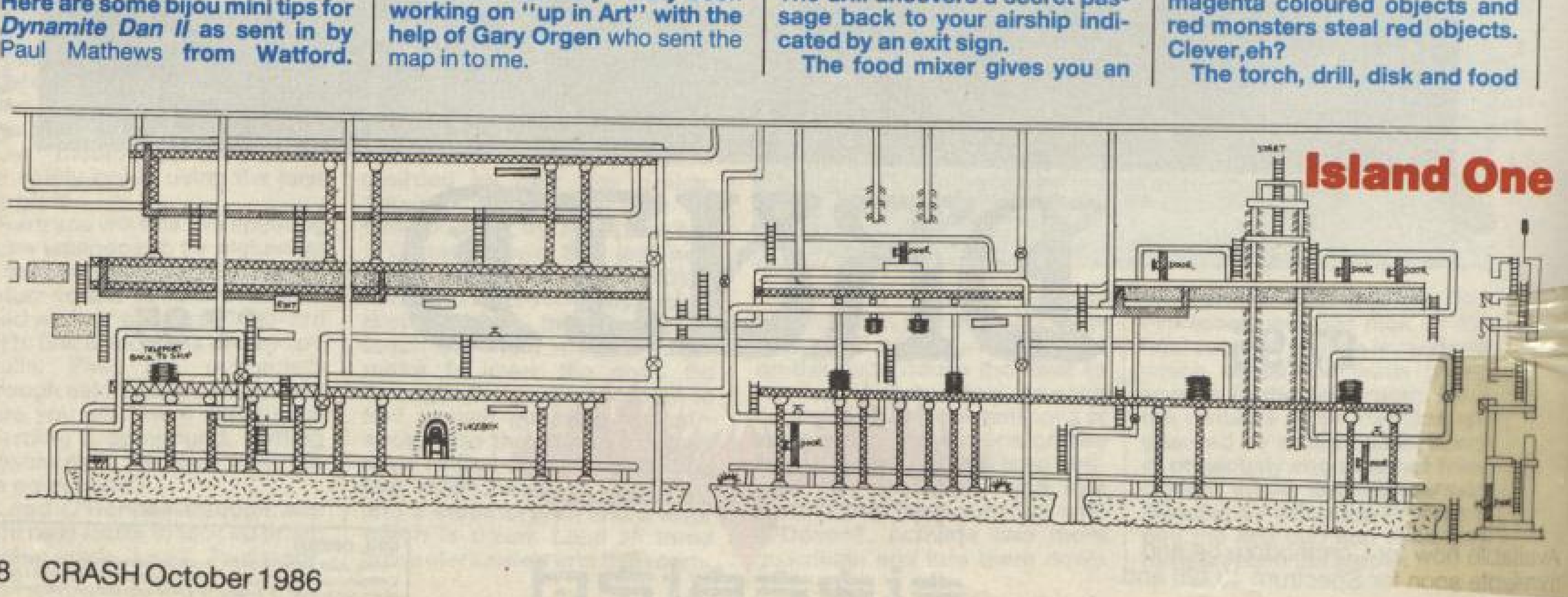
The torch lets you become immune to theft for a short time. The drill uncovers a secret passage back to your airship indicated by an exit sign.

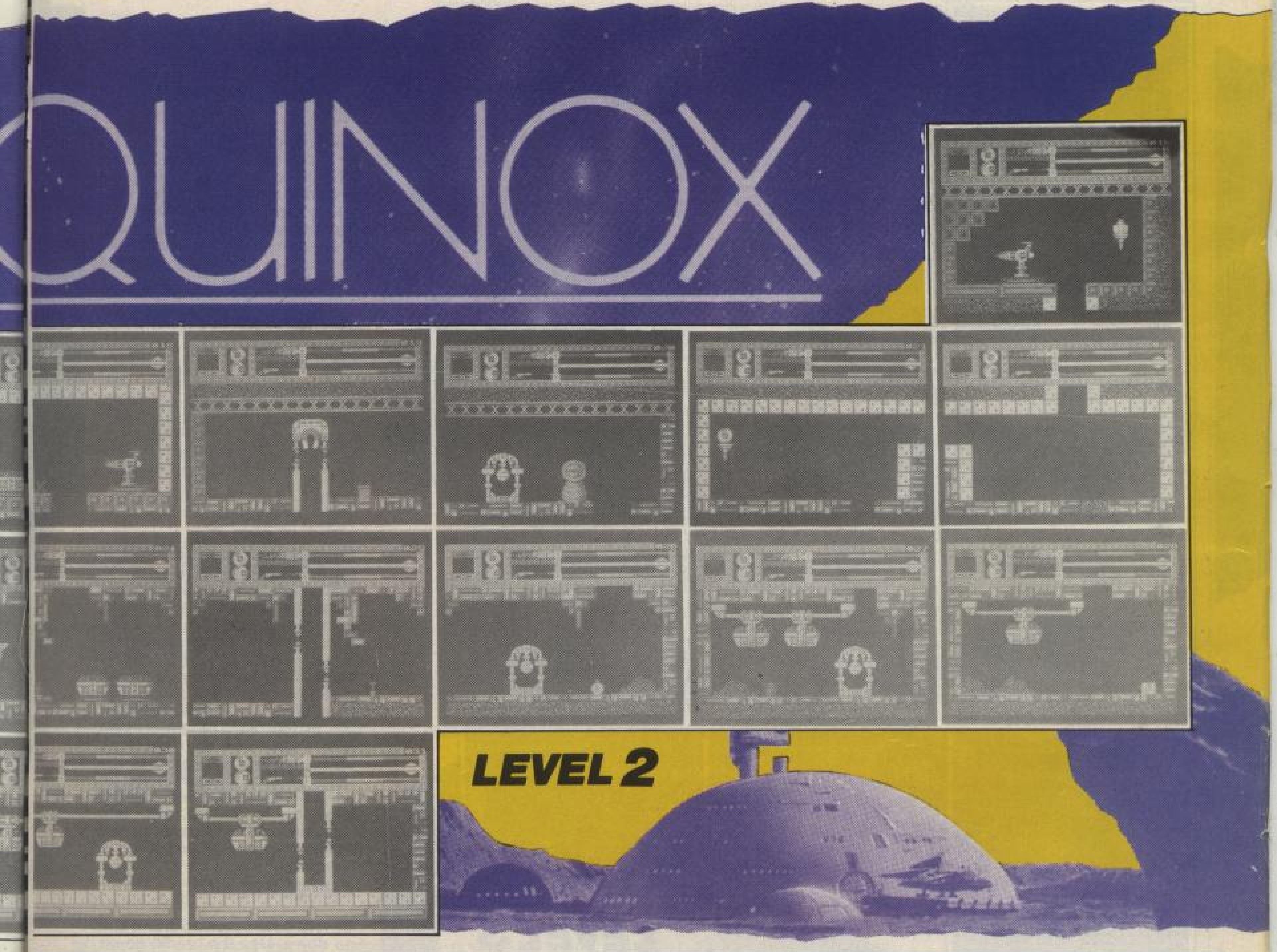
The food mixer gives you an endless supply of food.

Bombs blow away safe doors.

Magenta monsters steel magenta coloured objects and red monsters steal red objects. Clever,eh?

The torch, drill, disk and food





mixer can never be stolen. When you have found the disk, go up to the juke box and a tune will play. Then find the fuel and, using the secret passage return to your airship. Walk towards the right and you'll be magicked to the next island.

Island Two

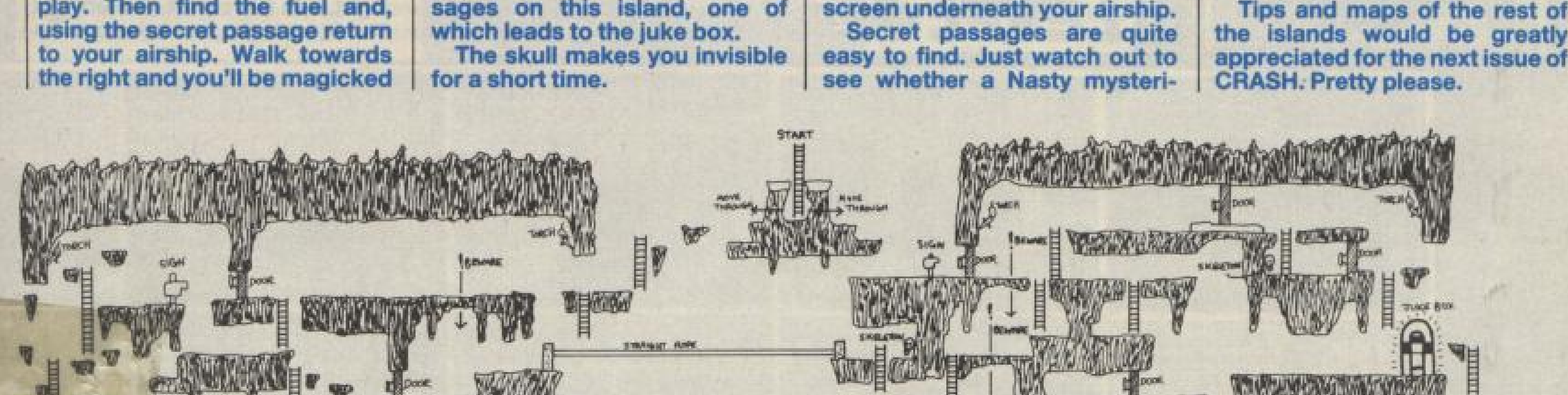
The ruby uncovers secret passages on this island, one of which leads to the juke box.

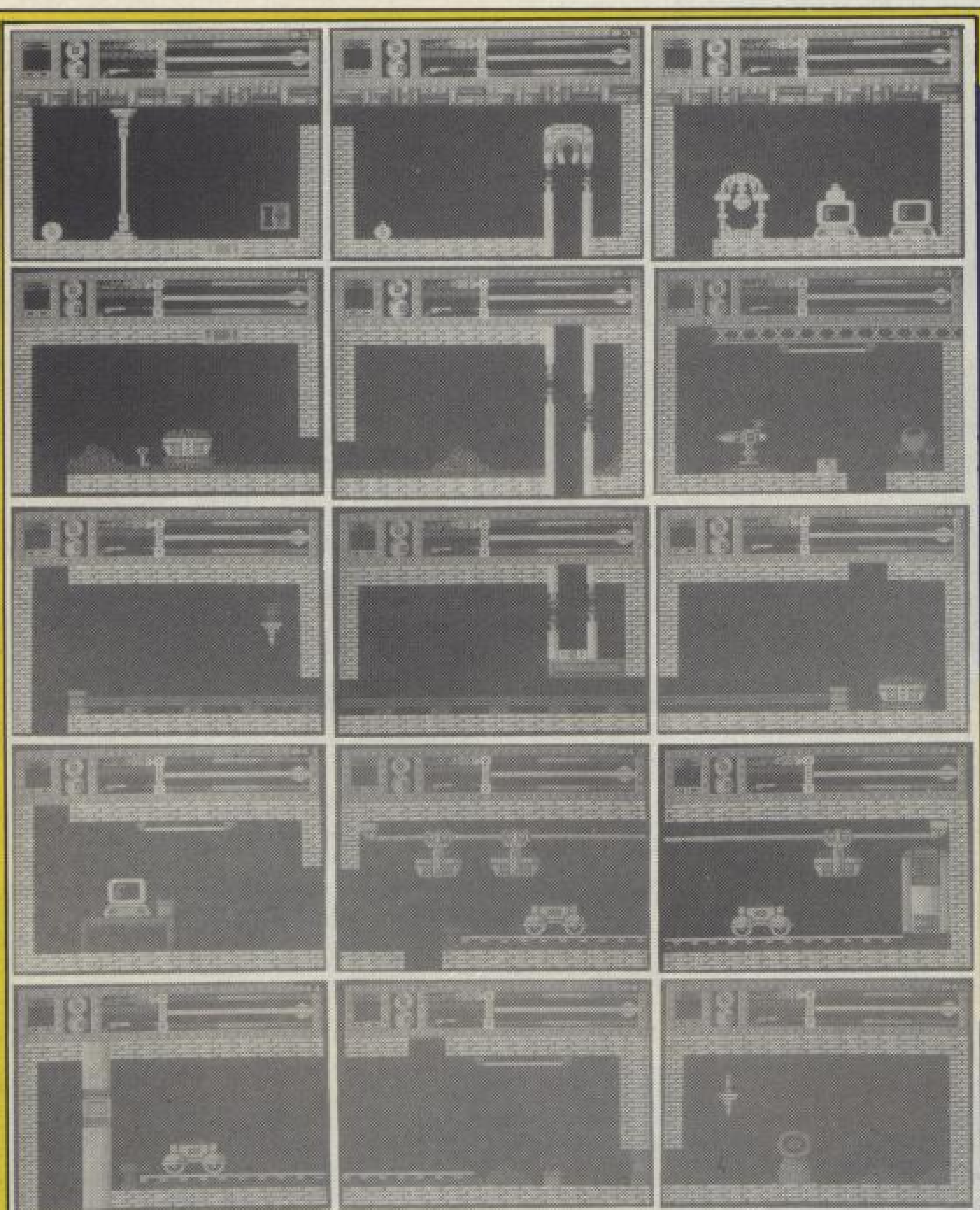
The skull makes you invisible for a short time.

Oxygen stops you from dying when you fall into the water. You will, however, return to the screen underneath your airship.

Secret passages are quite easy to find. Just watch out to see whether a Nasty mysteriously walks through a solid wall and then you'll know that there's a secret passage there.

Tips and maps of the rest of the islands would be greatly appreciated for the next issue of CRASH. Pretty please.





EQUINOX
THE FINAL SOLUTION

Last month I gave you the route to get up to level four in *Equinox*. This issue, however, I thought it would be nice if I published some tips that had been sent in by readers. Paul Phillipson-Masters from Thornbury in Bristol sent in the solution to the final four levels. Now that the *Equinox* POKE has been corrected there's absolutely no excuse for not get the lift. Go up twice and go up in the lift. Go left, down, get spade, right, right, out of lift, down twice, teleport. Go right. Right out of lift. Use spade on rocks. Get interface 7 and go up in lift. Go up as far as possible then go left, up in lift, right, up and you're there!

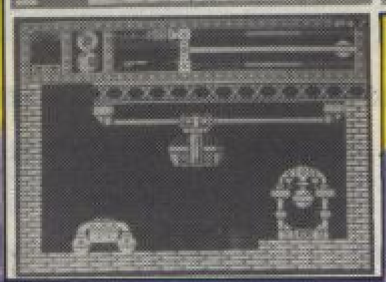
LEVEL SEVEN

Get the credit and go left twice, up and right twice. Use credit and go left twice to get the dynamite. Go right twice and teleport. Go up and use the dynamite on the rocks. Go right three times and go up in the lift and go up. Get the canister and go left until you reach the chute. Dispose of the canister and go right to get the fuse. Go right again and teleport. Go up, right three times and out of the lift to the right. Use the fuse when you go up and right. Go down and get interface 8. Go up, left, left, down the one-way passage and right for access to level 8.

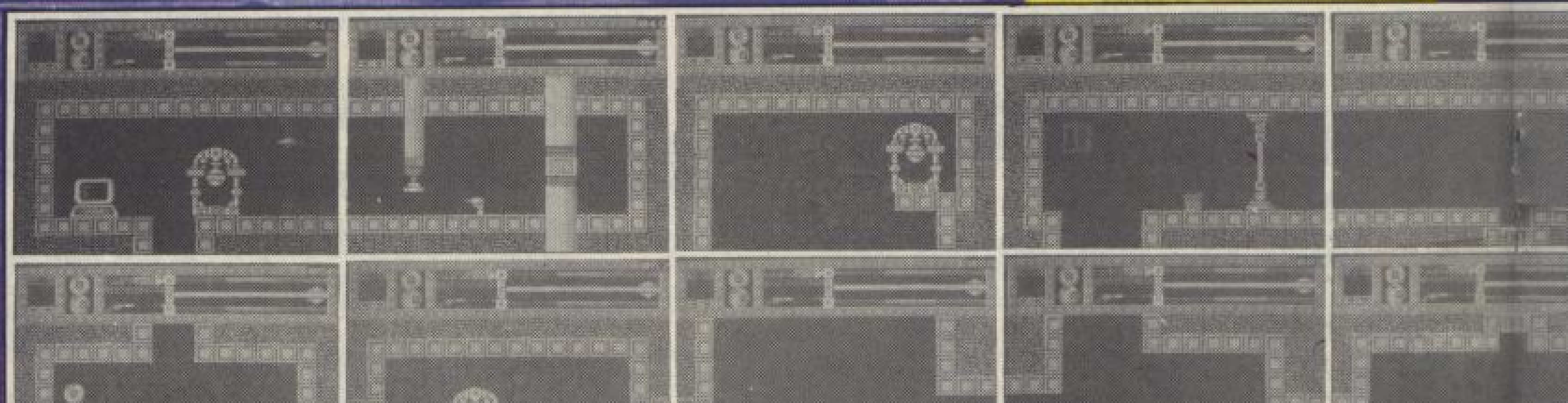
LEVEL EIGHT

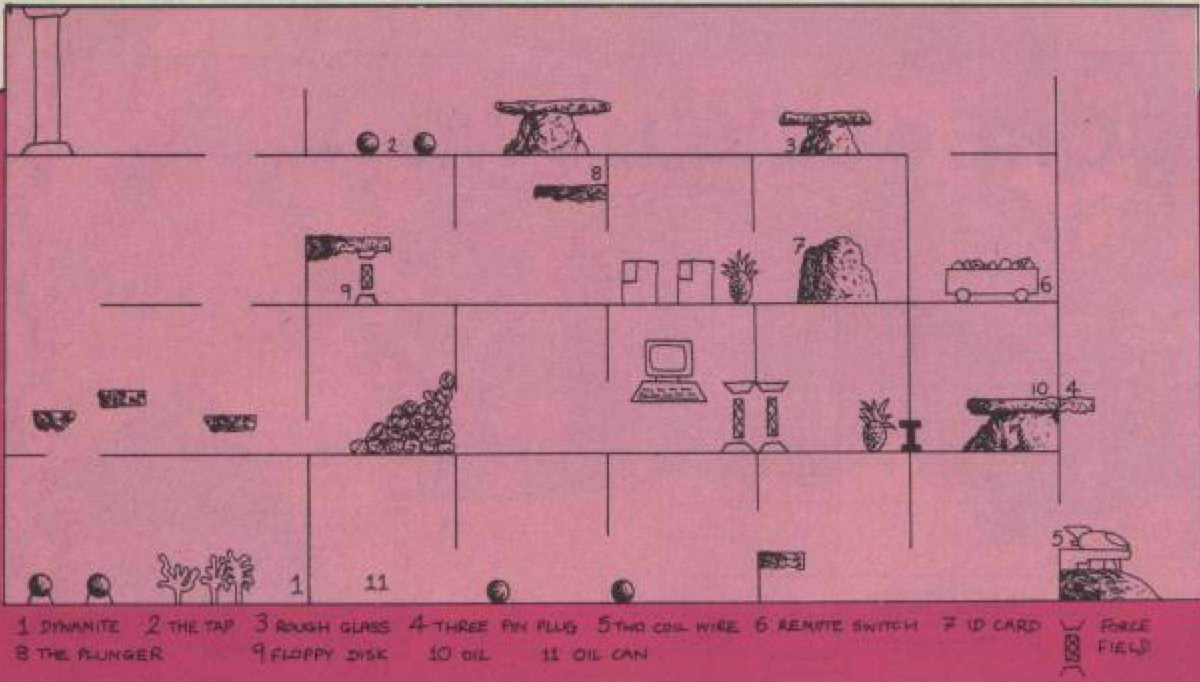
Go left, down, pick up credit and go down. Use the credit, go up twice to get the dynamite. Go down twice again and teleport. Go left, down, right and use the dynamite on the rocks. Go up and get the credit. Go down, right, use the credit. Go left, get the fuse, right and teleport. Go

LEVEL 3



LEVEL 4





UNIVERSAL HERO

MASTERTRONIC's latest hit, *Universal Hero* is a close contender to their last epic budget game, *Knight Tyme.* If you're having trouble getting your little spaceman off the asteroid then perhaps these tips from Simon Austin who lives in Essex will help you on your way. Simon has also included a map which is fairly essential when it comes to understanding his tips. Take it away Simon. . . .

1) Take the switch
2) Take it to the room with the disk and force field
3) Use switch
4) Take disk
5) Take plunger
6) Take dynamite
7) Take ID card
8) Take wire and plug
9) Go to the rock room
10) Use plunger, drop plunger
11) Go to the computer room
12) Use plug then disk
13) Type Slartibardfast (check key presses as auto repeat is quick)
14) Go and take the oil (Go right twice)
15) Get the tap and the glass
16) Go to the room with the pipe
17) Use the tap
18) Go to where the water was and go left to the pump room
19) Use the oil
20) Take the fuel
21) Go to the ship (make sure you have the ID card)
22) Use the fuel VRROOOOMMM. You are now off the Asteroid.

Next issue I shall be printing the solution for the Planet section of the game, so send those tips in quick.

DYNAMITE DAN II Infinite Everything

There I was about to sit down and eat my corned beef roll from Crumbs (the newly adopted CRASH "canteen"), when the phone rang. Unfortunately all the extensions have recently been changed here at CRASH Towers so making or receiving a telephone call is no mean feat anymore. Anyway, it turned out to be none other than me ol' mate, Phil Churchyard with a rivetting routine for MIRRORSOFT's *Dynamite Dan II.* Being a decent sort of person I decided to put away my lunch and type all this in, just for you, dear computer games POKEer.

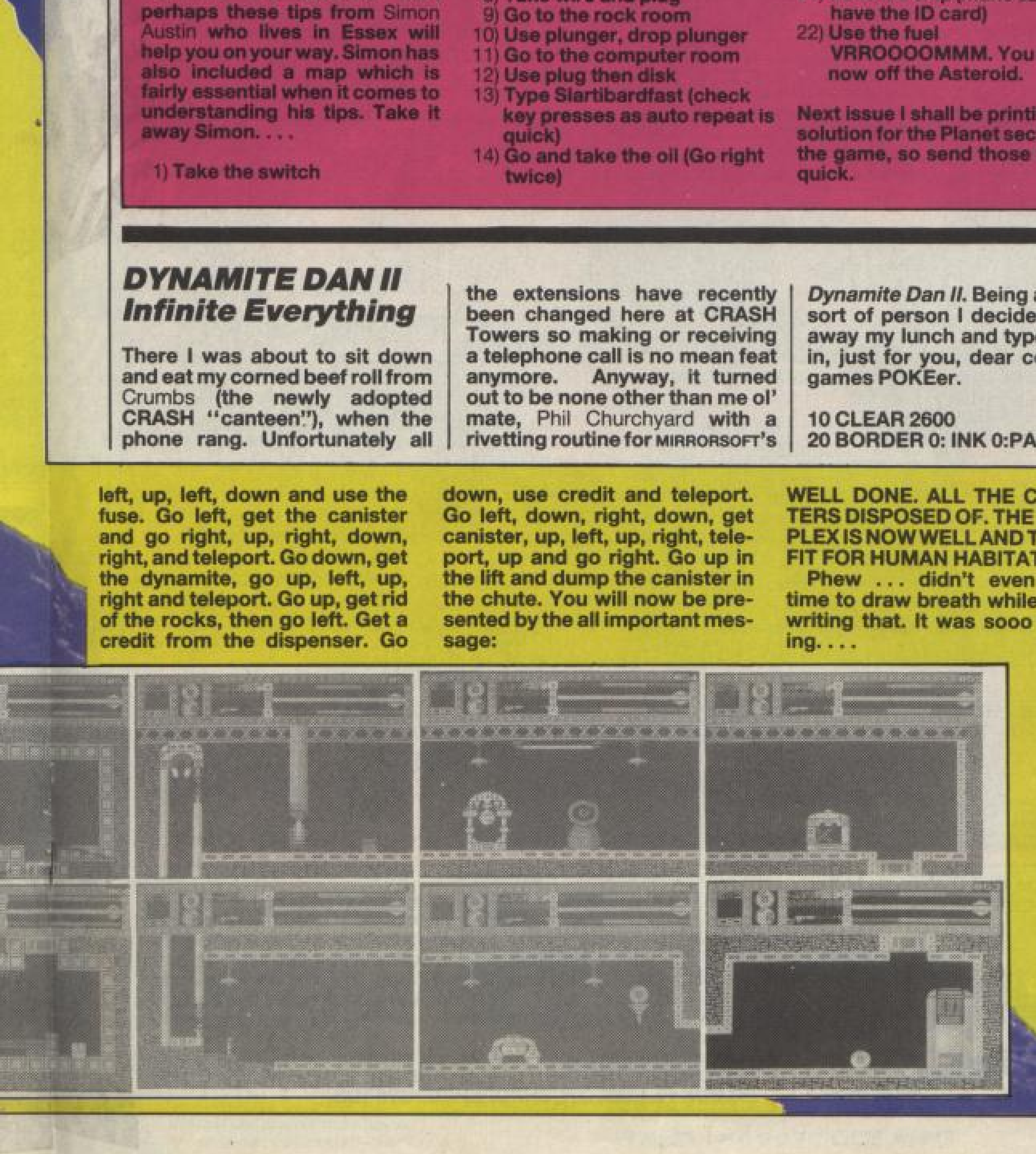
```
10 CLEAR 2600
20 BORDER 0: INK 0:PAPER 0:
CLS
30 PRINT = 1; AT 0,3; "START
DYNAMITE DAN TAPE"
40 MERGE ""
50 RESTORE
60 100 LET prog = PEEK
23635+256*PEEK OF 23636
110 POKE prog+193,201
120 RANDOMIZE USR (prog =
176)
130 POKE 40077,201
140 RANDOMIZE USR 40000
150 FOR i = 23296 TO 23301
160 READ a:POKE i,a:NEXT i
170 POKE 29544,201: REM NO
CREATURES
180 POKE 29002,182: REM INFI-
NITE ENERGY
190 POKE 33170,201 REM NO
BLITZEN
200 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
500 DATA 49,36,94,195,144,108
```

Mr Churchyard also tells me that when Dan picks up a pair of Magenta boots it will enable him to walk on water. With a bit of fancy side stepping it is also possible to walk from one island to another without having to solve all the problems first.

left, up, left, down and use the fuse. Go left, get the canister and go right, up, right, down, right, and teleport. Go down, get the dynamite, go up, left, up, right and teleport. Go up, get rid of the rocks, then go left. Get a credit from the dispenser. Go down, use credit and teleport. Go left, down, right, down, get canister, up, left, up, right, teleport, up and go right. Go up in the lift and dump the canister in the chute. You will now be presented by the all important message:

WELL DONE. ALL THE CANISTERS DISPOSED OF. THE COMPLEX IS NOW WELL AND TRULY FIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION.

Phew . . . didn't even have time to draw breath while I was writing that. It was sooo exciting. . . .



CON QUEST Infinite Lives

Derek Brewster, our ace adventure person's latest game, *Con Quest* is a bit of a brute to get through. These infinite lives POKEs kindly sent in by Peter Baldwin from Wimborne in Dorset might help you get further into the game. Type the program in and RUN. Then delete it line by line by typing in the line numbers and pressing ENTER. When you've gone through all the line numbers up to 170 then type the RANDOMIZE USR statements (printed after the main program) and then start the *Con Quest* tape.

```
10 LET c = 0: BORDER 0: PAPER
0: INK 7: CLS
20 FOR a = 23296 TO 23355
30 READ b: POKE a,b: LET c =
c+b
40 NEXT a
50 IF c<>5806 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA"
60 DATA 221,033,000,064,017
70 DATA 000,027,062,255,055
80 DATA 205,086,005,221,033
90 DATA 000,064,017,000,027
100 DATA 062,255,055,205,086
110 DATA 005,221,033,192,093
120 DATA 017,032,078,062,255
130 DATA 055,205,086,005,221
140 DATA 033,224,171,017,031
150 DATA 084,062,255,055,205
160 DATA 086,005,062,060,050
170 DATA 177,150,195,137,132
```

Type RUN then delete each line and type:

```
1 CLEAR 23999: RANDOMIZE
USR 23296: RANDOMIZE USR
23347
```

start the Con Quest tape.
NOTE: DO NOT "NEW" THE FIRST PROGRAM.

PLAYING TIPS

DAN DARE

The Mekon in *Dan Dare* is threatening all sorts of nasty things again. And poor old Dan is all on his own, without even his trusty friend Digby to help him. If you're going to stand any chance of stopping that asteroid colliding with mother Earth then you'll certainly need these POKEs from my chum Phil Churchyard.

```
10 BORDER 0: INK 0: PAPER 0:
CLS: CLEAR 25599
20 RESTORE
30 FOR i = 23296 TO 23311
40 READ a: POKE i,a
50 NEXT i
60 PRINT = 1; AT 0,6; "START
DAN DARE TAPE"
70 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
80 POKE 65326,201
90 RANDOMIZE USR 65032
100 POKE 47710,201
110 POKE 46885,201
120 POKE 43526,0
130 POKE 42863,0
140 POKE 42111,0
150 RANDOMIZE USR 39000
500 DATA 221,33,171,253,17,9,3
510 DATA 62,255,55,205,86,5
520 DATA 48,241,201
```

Line 100 gives you infinite energy, line 110 gives you infinite time, line 120 gives you infinite ammunition, line 130 lets you fall as far as you like, and line 140 stops you being put in prison in sector three when a nasty gets you.

SPELLBOUND (Yet Again)

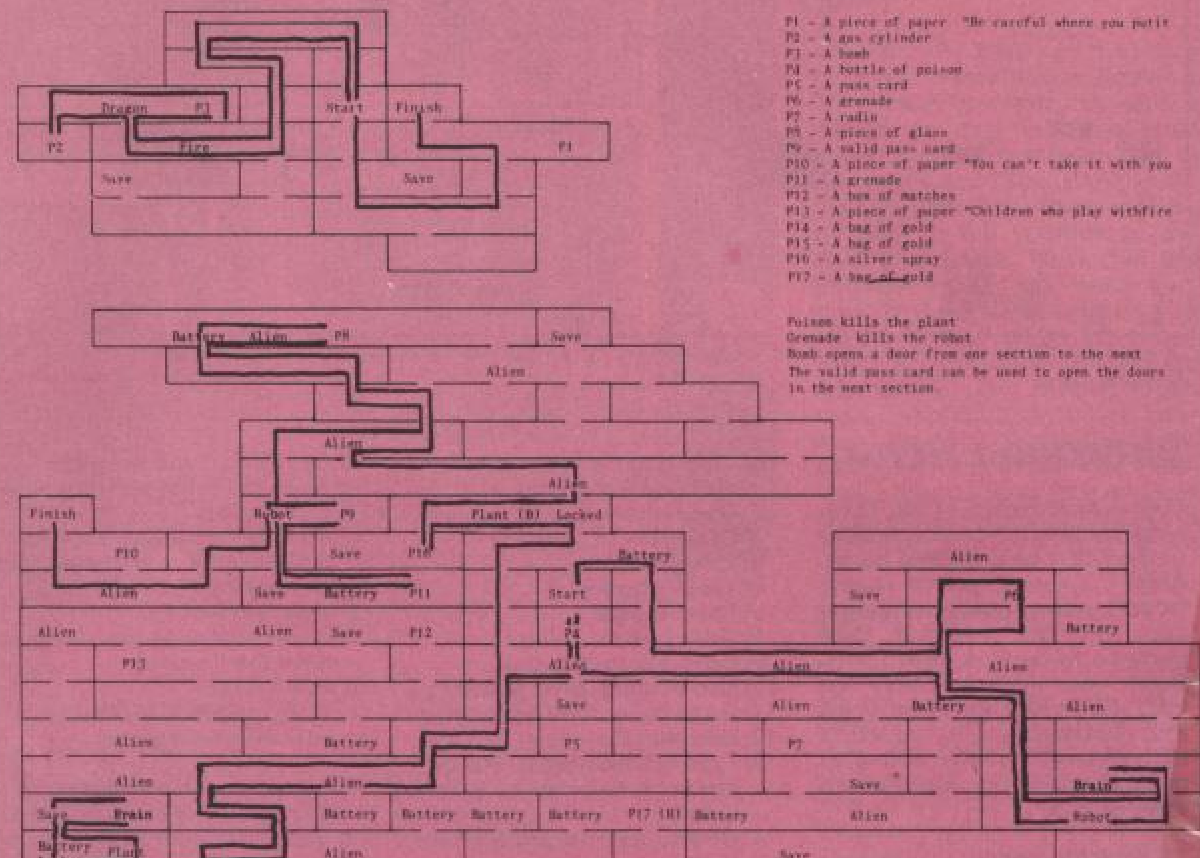
After last month's Absolute No Quibbling Solution for *Spellbound*, I've received a couple of phone calls informing me that after all the trouble I've gone to, people are still puzzling over how to get past the tower.

Luckily Chris Edge from Wallasy in Merseyside wrote in with the way to get around it.

In order to get past the tower on level four you must have the two lumps of brickwork. To get the bricks take Eklrand to D6 and after he has destroyed the wall two lumps of brickwork will be created, one on either side of the hole. Take them both to B2 and drop them both. Pick up the lower brick and leave the other one where it is. The brick which you've picked up can be used to cross the pit in F7 along with the platform which Samsun throws.

Chris also goes on to say that jumping at the pictures in the gallery will give you an extra 1% of score and without collecting these extra points it is impossible to get 100% in the game. Let's hope that that really is the last I'll hear of *Spellbound*. Ever (scream). . . .

CORE • LEVEL TWO



JACK THE NIPPER CORRECTION

The ZX printer strikes again. This time it made me miss out a + sign in line 70 of the *Jack The Nipper* POKEs last issue. Also I have it on good advice that if you take out the STOP statement in line 110 then the POKEs work brilliantly. Once again lots and lots of apologies. I do my best you know . . .

Hope the tips and POKEs this month were of help to someone. As usual all contributions greatly received. How about some stuff on *Scooby Doo*, *Nexor*, *Paperboy*, and *Trap Door*. In fact anything you like. There will be the usual rewards up for grabs, you lucky Tipping, Mapping and POKEing people. Also if Peter Roe who drew the *Action Reflex* and *Ghosts and Goblins* maps last issue reads this could he please get in touch with me as I've lost his address and need it urgently!

As always send your mail for my attention to HANNAH SMITH (ASSUREDLY THE ONLY GIRLIE TIPSTER) CRASH PLAYING TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.


SPECTRUM 48K
NIGHTMARE RALLY
DEMON-1
WAKELIN
ocean

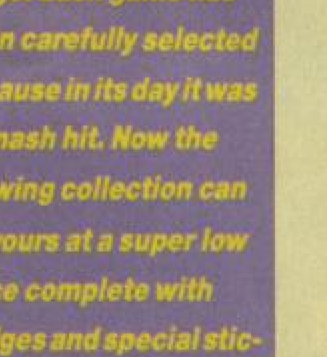


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JASPER

This is a twenty-two screen arcade adventure which includes platforms and *Jet Set Willy* type ropes as well as a host of nasties to avoid. You play the part of Jasper, super mouse extraordinaire and have to scamper round collecting and using objects in order to complete the game and travel through all the screens. Awarded a CRASH Smash back in November 1984, this game was written by Derek Brewster . . . you know, the fellow who writes about adventuring for us!



3D TANK DUEL

The trio behind REALTIME began to make their mark as masters of 3D techniques with this Battle Zone clone. Arriving after *Rommel's Revenge* and *3D Combat Zone* this version of the arcade classic was adjudged the best of all by the CRASH reviewing team in August '84. Wire-frame graphics on the Spectrum haven't been quite the same since this game was launched — rated 83% Overall *Tank Duel* is a game no self-respecting Battle Zone arcade master should be without.



CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

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MY GOD IT'S WAR!

WIN 50 COPIES OF MARTECH'S NEW SHOOT EM UP!

Destruction is the name of the game in ~~MARTECH~~'s latest offering, ~~WAR~~. The theme of the game is to ~~DESTROY~~ the evil ~~EMPIRE~~ which is waiting pensively to attack and ~~EXPLODE~~ your craft to ~~ANNIHILATE~~ all resistance. If you manage to survive their ~~LASERS~~ and ~~DEFENCE~~ systems then you can hold your ~~HEAD~~ up high and return home a ~~HERO~~. ~~VICTORY~~ will be yours. So head for the ~~STAR~~s (twinkle twinkle) and LAUGH (ha ha) in the face of ~~DEATH~~...

Below is a specially adapted word square designed by your ever faithful minion in the eternal struggle to bring you lot lots of freebies. This time those cheerful chaps down at **MARTECH** are giving away 50 copies of their game *WAR*, which is previewed this month along with five very stylish **MARTECH** T shirts for the first five entries pulled out of Graeme's Doc Marten Boot. Once you have found all 14 words pop your entry into an envelope and post it off to: **WAR, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.** Get them in by October 23rd and you'll soon find yourself going to *WAR*!

CRASH WAR WORDSQUARE

W	D	E	S	T	R	O	Y	C	S
K	R	E	C	N	E	F	E	D	E
O	P	A	A	E	M	P	I	R	E
S	D	U	N	X	P	A	W	N	E
E	L	O	N	V	O	R	P	B	T
H	E	R	O	I	A	E	A	H	A
L	X	H	N	C	M	S	C	G	L
U	P	E	C	T	S	E	L	U	I
R	L	L	R	O	T	L	A	A	H
Y	O	L	T	R	R	K	S	D	I
P	D	O	A	Y	A	G	E	A	N
A	E	M	Y	Z	D	T	R	E	N
Z	L	P	R	A	W	F	S	H	A
Z	Q	M	U	R	H	T	A	E	D

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

....

POSTCODE ....

MAKE SURE YOU DO
TRAMPLED IN THE

LIST A



KUNG FU MASTER

Converted from the Arcade game of the same name, Kung Fu master was released in August of this year and reaped 56% from the CRASH commenters. Using your prowess in the martial art of Kung Fu, you must defeat the enemy and release some fair oriental damsel from a fate worse than death.



WINTER GAMES

Winter Games was a sure hit with CRASH reviewers back in March 1986. In fact they enjoyed whizzing down the ski-jumps, bombing around on the bobsleigh and skimming over the skating rink so much that they awarded it 93% Overall, making it another CRASH Smash for US Gold. Winter Games contains seven events spread over two sides of a cassette.



PENTAGRAM

ULTIMATE

Pentagram was only reviewed in CRASH four months ago and yet here it is included with the subscriptions offer! With a rating of 93%, Sabreman makes his return. You must help him extricate himself from the nasty forest which is full of witches on broomsticks, sleepwalking zombies and various nasty manifestations. Sabreman must try and collect the pieces of the sacred Pentagram to finish the game.

LIST B



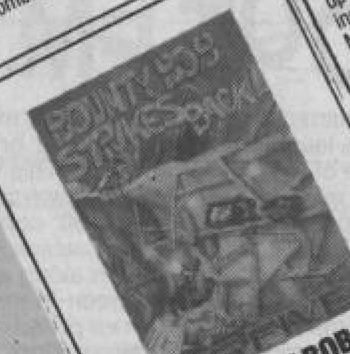
BEACH HEAD II

Manic megalomaniac, The Dragon is trying to recoup his losses after his embarrassing defeats in the Pacific during the Second World War. Stryker, the Allies' hero must try and penetrate The Dragon's stronghold to bring about his ultimate downfall. Reviewed in CRASH in last year's Christmas Special, this combat game earned 74% overall.



BRUCE LEE

Bruce Lee has returned to the land of his forefathers to defeat the evil wizard. This is not easy because first he has to fight with a large number of martial arts supremos and find his way around a complicated underground maze. This platform beat em up earned itself a CRASH Smash, scoring 91% when it was reviewed back in May 1985.



BOUNTY BOB

Bounty Bob was reviewed in CRASH exactly a year ago this month. A follow on from the Manic Miner type games and taken from the Atari game Miner 2049, this arcade platform game proved very popular and only narrowly escaped getting a SMASH with a percentage of 85%

This month sees a slight quietening of activity on the **MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER** front — the Editor of the Journal has nipped off on her hols, and there's no Journal for subscribers this month. (BOO!) But the good news is, there should be a mega poster from **PIRANHA** as well as an A4 *WAR* posterette courtesy of **MARTECH** included with the copies of CRASH sent to owners of a **MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER**. (HURRAH!)

Next month, normal service should be resumed on the journal, but for now we can offer a tempting array of **US GOLD** and **ULTIMATE** goodies if you haven't yet got your very own **MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER**.

A veritable stack of software hits, some Old **GOLD**, some bright and shiny **GOLD** are on offer — if you subscribe this month for the very first time, or want to renew the power of your **MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER** for another twelve whole issues of the CRASH course of Softwareology, then now's not a bad time. You can choose ONE game from List A or TWO games from List B when you send Guru Denise that chequipoos for £14.50

ON'T GET (US) GOLD RUSH!



RAID OVER MOSCOW

Raid Over Moscow was one of the more unusual games featured in CRASH. In the game you are sent on a virtual suicide mission to destroy missiles aimed at the USA, and then continue on to Moscow to knock out the Soviet defence centre. The game is really six games in one and each stage requires a different sort of skill to complete successfully. It gained 92% in April 1985 making it yet another CRASH Smash for US Gold.



IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Yikes, once again you have to save the world. This time it's from mad hacker Elvin Atombender who has accessed all the defence computers on planet Earth and is at this very moment trying to find out the codes to trigger a huge missile attack which will wipe out the entire world. Your mission is to stop him before it's too late. This conversion from the original Commodore 64 game was duly awarded 76% back in November of last year.



TAPPER

Another game with an unusual scenario from US Gold was Tapper. In this CRASH Smash you have the chance to see if you'd make a competent barman. You're put in charge of several bars filled with extremely parched and unreasonable customers. You have to make sure each customer gets served before he reaches the other end of the bar. If you fail to do this then your barman is slung out on his ear. In June 1985 the CRASH trainee barpersons awarded it Smash status.



SPY HUNTER

Spy Hunter was US Gold's official version of the successful arcade game. Driving your amphibious car you hunt the spies by land and water in this fast and furious shoot 'em up. Manoeuvering your vehicle along the roads and rivers is very tricky because they twist and turn and are filled with the enemy. The CRASH Reviewers thought it was worthy of a CRASH Smash . . .

Dear Guru Denise

I've been busily ticking boxes to tell you what I'd like you to do for me:

☐ **I would love to take advantage of this GOLDen offer. I would like you to have a quiet chat with your computer and issue me with a personalised MYSTERY SUBSCRIBER NUMBER as soon as you can. I would like you to send me CRASH every month, starting with Issue No......... (But I realise that you need to have received this by 3rd October if my subscription is to start with Issue 34.**

I have ticked ONE box against a game from List A OR two boxes from List B and would like you to arrange for Auntie Aggie to send my game(s) to me in a jiffy bag, totally separately from my first copy of CRASH. Aggie's eversuch a busy girl these days, so I realise it might take a little teensy while for my games to arrive. I've also enclosed a cheque or postal order for £14.50 made payable to NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS

☐ **I already own a MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER, it is very healthy and it is:**

NO: ....

But I'd still like to increase my US GOLD collection. So I've ticked EITHER one game from List A OR two games from List B and would like a jiffybag full of goodies to come winging its way to me, so here's a cheque or postal order for £5.50 made payable to NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS.

☐ **My MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER is well poorly. It is:**

NO: ....

and I'd like you to recharge it Guru D. So here's my cheque or postal order for £14.50 and I've ticked EITHER one game from List A OR two games from List B. I understand it'll probably take Jiffybag Aggie a week or so to get my goodies off to me. Meanwhile, please try and refresh my MYSTICAL SUBSCRIBER NUMBER as soon as you can — I realise that if you don't receive this before October 3rd I'll have to wait till Issue 35 before my Course of Softwareology starts arriving the the mail again . . .

LIST A — TICK ONE

- ☐ **WINTER GAMES**
- ☐ **PENTAGRAM**
- ☐ **KUNG FU MASTER**

OR

LIST B — TICK TWO

- ☐ **BOUNTY BOB**
- ☐ **BRUCE LEE**
- ☐ **RAID OVER MOSCOW**
- ☐ **SPY HUNTER**
- ☐ **TAPPER**
- ☐ **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION**
- ☐ **BEACH HEAD II**

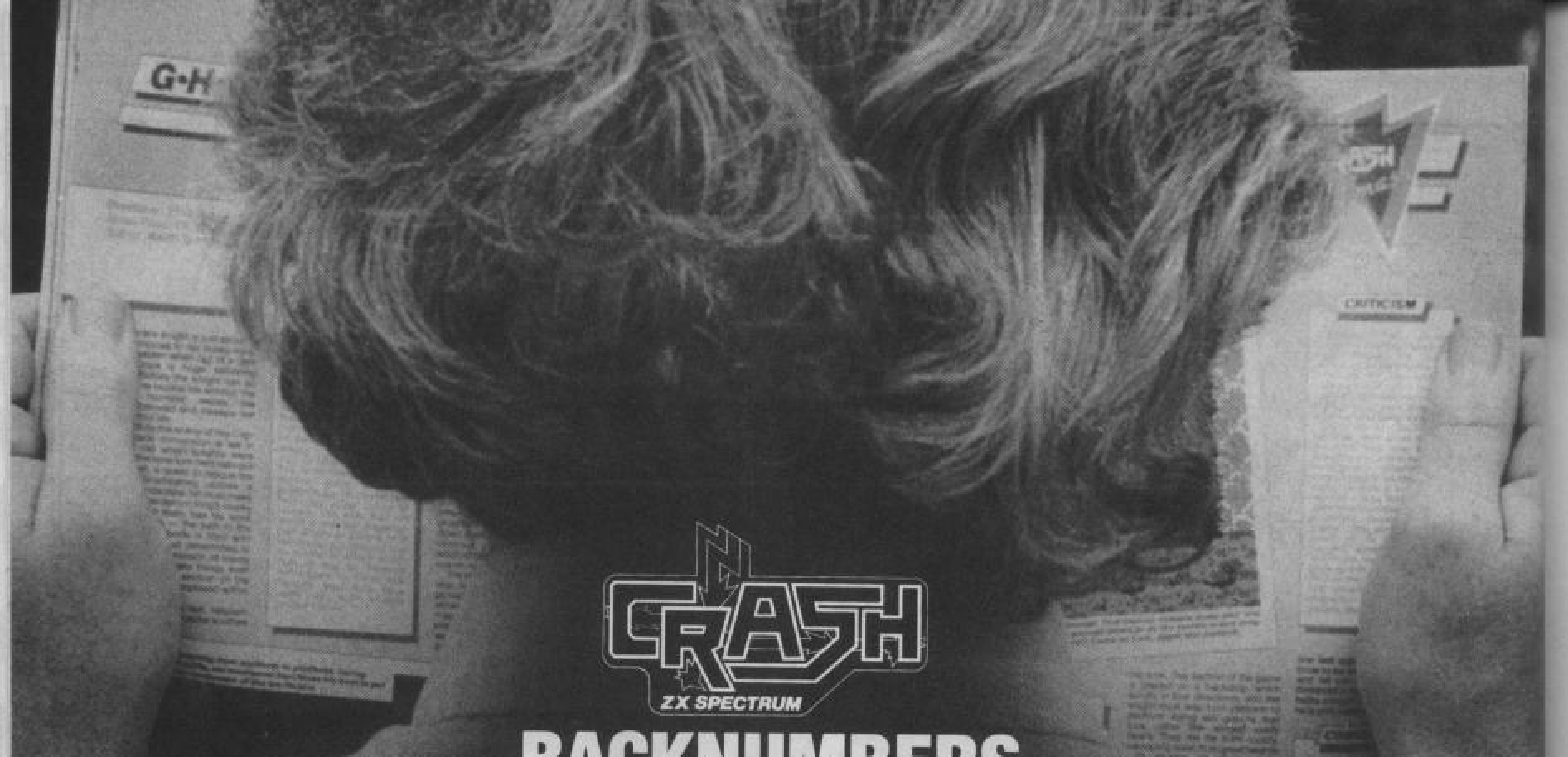
MY NAME IS: ....

AND I LIVE AT: ....

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.... POST CODE ....



BACKNUMBERS
Fill That CRASH Gap . . .

3:April 84 ●Missile Command games●Living Guide●Code Name Mat

4:May 84 ●The Quill Utility●Graphics utilities●Microdrive●'Pengo' games●Living Guide

10:Nov 84 ●Battlefield Joystick — comparisons●Deus Ex Machina

17:Jun 85 ●Denton Designs●Frankie●Spectrum surgery●Sinclair Story 3●Knight Lore Map 1●Underwurlde Map 2●Tape to Microdrive●Leonardo Graphics utility●Datel sound sampler●Artist: David Thorpe

18:Jul 85 ●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in issue 8●Gyron Map of Atrium●Modems round-up●And the cover that had the Jehovas Jumping!

19:Aug 85 ●WITHOUT PAGES 123,124,125 and 126. WITH:●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire

20:Sep 85 ●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview

21:Oct 85 ●Previews of MARSPORT, ASTROCLONE, ELITE●NODES OF YESOD map●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram●Crashtionnaire analysis●Platinum Productions profile

22:Nov 85 ●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in TECH NICHE and part two of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is on the Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks

23:Dec 85 ●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends●Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th

Xmas 1985/6 ●On the Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants profile●Short story●Festive Fun and Frolics

25:Feb 86 ●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double Dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and examines extensions to ZX BASIC

26:Mar 86 ●ST BRIDE's Profile● A first look at the Spectrum 128●Micronet 800●Romantic Robot's Multiface One under scrutiny●Diary of 2186

27:Apr 86 ●Massive 23 page Playing Tips Supplement●1985 Readers Awards results●Mel Croucher interview●Imagine profile●Round up of 128K games●A visit to the first Play By Mail convention

28:May 86 ●Update on the Fanzine scene●MARTECH profile and PLANETS preview●DIY Composite Video Interface●Inside Cheetah's SpecDrum●FRONTLINE Mini Strategyback●CRASHTIONNAIRE 86 analysis

29:Jun 86 ●First PBM MAILBOX and CRASH GALLERY●SpecDrum listing●Homegrown software●REALTIME profile●Compilations compared●Maps of CYLU, SIR FRED, SABOTEUR and Parts 1 and 2 of TANTALUS

30:Jul 86 ●More CRASH/RAINBIRD Gallery●More Homegrown Software●THE BIRTH OF A GAME: some early entries●Good Games by DESIGN●Luna Jetman returns

Issues 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 are now out of stock.SORRY! Back issues are going fast — better get your orders in quick. It's probably worth telephoning if you want to order early issues, as we're getting short. And if you missed Issue 19, we can now complete the gap in your collection with a trimmed down version, which has a tasteful sticker added to the front cover announcing the fact!

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WINNERS & PRIZES

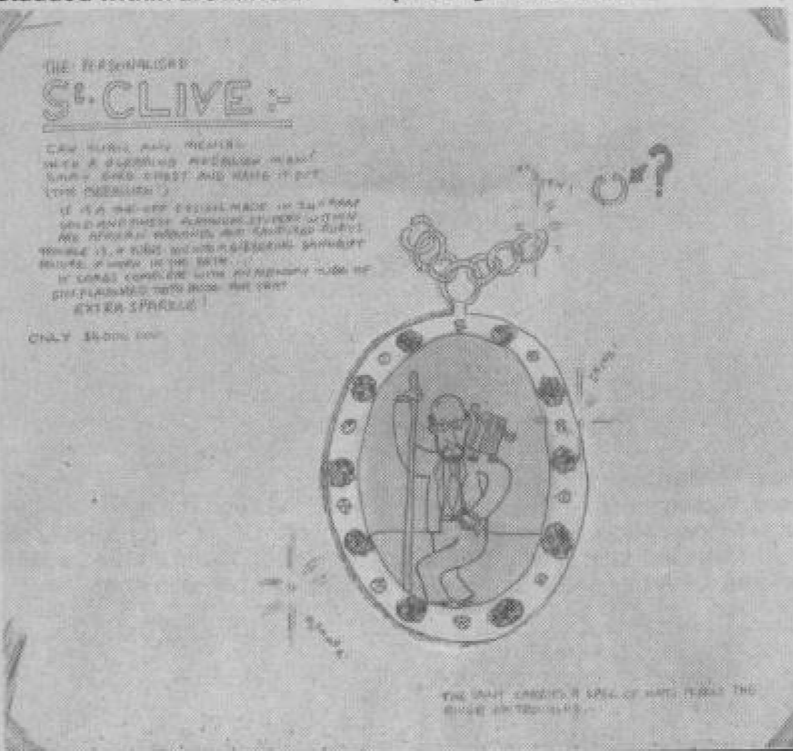


THE PERSONALISED ST CLIVE

Text from the first prize winner . . . to go with his St Clive Medallion . . .

Can turn any menial into a gleaming medallion man! Simply bare chest and hang it out (..The MEDALLIION!!) It is a one off design, made in 24 carat gold and finest platinum. Studded within are African diamonds and randy red rubies. Trouble is, it turns you into a gibbering bankrupted failure if worn in the bath . . . ! It comes complete with an economy tube of gin-flavoured tooth paste for that.. EXTRA SPARKLE!

Only £4,000,000



The Saint carries a Speccy of sorts across the river of troubles. Glimmer Shine Glisten

PCW SHOW FREEBIES

Those winsome winners of 40 freebie tickets to what they correctly answered as being the 9th PCW Show, will have already been and gone by the time they get their sweaty little mitts on this issue. But just so they're not disappointed by not having their names reproduced, here's a list of the lucky forty:

J Khan, Ellesmere Rd, B'ham 8; Tom Oliver, St Mary's Way, SG7 6JF; Mark Bettis, Shire Close, CM1 5FN; Christopher Stone, Abbexhill Rd, DA15 9AX; Mr H Jones, Fountains Garth, RG12 4RH; Paul Taylor, Holme Close, AL10 9IQ; Jamie W Cook, Sarum, Berkshire; Noel Chiftini, Middlegate Rd, PE20 1AR; Nick Laslett, Chislet Forstal, CT3 4DT; Paul Reeves, Regent Drive, BH7 7RW; Paul Johnson, Lucey Close, RG3 6FF; Mr G P Craig, Finlow Terrace, DD4 9NQ; MJ Parker, Western Way, SG6 4SR; Paul Johnson, Milton Crescent, RH19 1TL; J Clayton, Mayfield Rd, Cheshire; D Platt, Hawks Hill, SL8 5JQ; Andrew Callaghan, Como Rd, SE23 2JW; Kenson Low, Langham Gardens, HA0 3RG; Andrew Dudley, Kingston, BN7 3LW; Gavin Cameron, Cruickshank Crescent, AB2 9BS; Andrew Callaghan, Como Rd, SE23 2JW; Philip Hancock, Charlemont Rd, E6 4HE; Adam Vaughan, Whittlebury Ct, NN12 8XQ; Richard Haslock, Dial Mill Rd, BS21 7EW; David Prescott, Minard Rd, SE6 1NR; Elliot Rose, Clayhill Avenue, IG5 0LD; Chris Lewis, Oakhill Rd, KT21 2JG; Anthony Stephens, Ralph Rd, B'ham 8; Jamie Eastman, Stoke Lane, BS9 3DN; A Ellerton, Love Lane, DY8 2DA; L Phillips, Bower House, Birmingham; Paul Hargrove, Selwood Way, HP13 5XR; Mr Siuwah Li, The Woodlands, N12 0DU; Paul Laslett, Tudor House, CT3 4DT; Nicholas Hart, Airedale, W4 2NN; S Brayley, Redway Drive, TW2 7NN; Khalid Akram, Shelley Rd, OX4 3EA; Mr Vinh Quan, Milner Square, N1 1TW, , D Martin, Munster Gardens, N13 5DT; Malcolm Stewart, Palk Walk, CH2 2EH.

JUKE BOX JUVE

The *Dynamite Dan II* comp attracted a lot of entries all of which showed a fairly comprehensive knowledge of music. The first name out of the minion's hat though was **Miss T Robinson** of Leighton Rd, Hove who will have received her jukebox at the PCW show - presented by Captain Kidd himself and Pat Bitton of Mirrorsoft. I only hope that they offered to give her a hand to get it home. The runners up will all receive a set of the top ten singles.

RUNNERS UP
N Tarbox, Elmshot Lane, SL1 5QZ; Craig A Morgan, Ward Place, NG18 5RF; W Van Rest, Hanbury Rd, B93 8DN; Tommy Carrie, Forth Crescent, DD2 4HZ; M Harrison, Maple Close, SO51 8RZ.

128 SPECTRUM WINNER

Quicksilva offered a 128 Speccy as first prize for the person who gave the right number of lock units on a Tantalus Map. The most numerate bod, who came up with 32 as the correct number was **Anthony Cawood** of Daleside Avenue, LS28 8HD. The ten runners who will receive a Quicksilva games pack are
DA Smith, Chichester Rd, DN35 0JJ; Simon Tierney, Crawford St, W1H 1AL; Stephen Charles, Elston Hall Lane, WV10 9HA; Andrew Shand, Calder Place, EH11 4LR; Carl Frew, Riverside Rd, OX4 4UF; Alison Kent, Langford Grove, SN3 1BT; Jeffrey Belt, Falcon Lane, Stockport-on-Tees; Kyle Heath, Witherford Way, B29 4AW; Adam Muir, Main St, LA6 2AE; Denise Weeden, Chichester Rd, DN35 0JJ

MINION STRIKES BACK

CRL and **ST BRIDES** came up with a competition with which to get my own back on the purile pranksters in the Crash office. The winner was **Richard Palstow** who must be feared by most of Dimsdale St, SG14 1PH after seeing all the fiendish ideas for revenge he gave me. An enourmous joke kit will be sent to him and runner up jokette kits will go to the following.

JOKERETTES
Stuart Garland, Yew Tree Drive, BS15 4UA; Stephen Grant, Osborne Rd, BN1 6LR; Martin Read, Love Lane, Hants; Savvas Tombouloglou, Girdlestone Walk, N19 5DP; Stuart Hayes, Boulton, BL1 3LB.

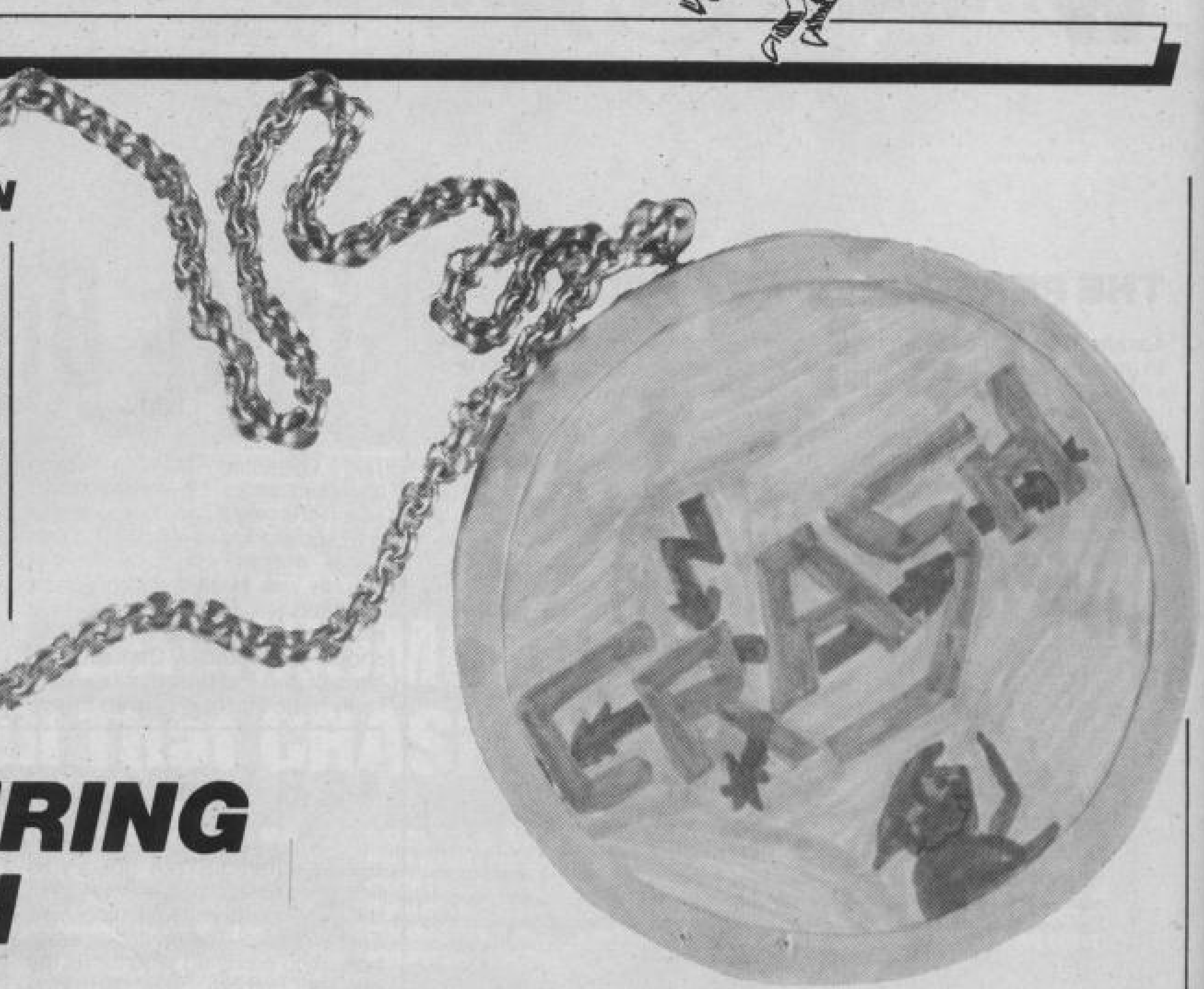


CHOCCY LOKI COMP

The scummiest competition in last issue was set by Simon Goodwin, our very own sweet-toothed Tech Tipster. He's been known to demand several pounds of choccy chomp for writing just one page of tips ... Unfortunately as yet though, he refuses to work for peanuts. The lucky winner who gets a chocolate computer is **Neil Smith** of Robert Ave, PE1 3XY. No prizes for runners up in this competition but then who would want what's left over?







MEDALLION MAN

As you can see from the picture, **Matthew Hook** of Bromsgrove, designed a St Clive which was just the thing to brighten up the otherwise monochrome existence of a Crash team minion and will receive a £125 jewelry voucher for his selfless act courtesy of **RAINBIRD** and **LEVEL 9**. The fifty quid second prize went to **Claire Ritchie** of Midlothian who made her medallion which now adorns the Comp Minion's neck. **Peter Cousins** of Kent took the third prize for his dragon jewellry and receives £25 of glittering goodies.

GLITTERING MINION

Beautifying a minion is not a task to take lightly and **RAINBIRD** and **LEVEL 9** (who are currently producing *Jewels of Darkness*) know this to be the case with the non-designer Crash team. That is why they were offering solid gold prizes to anyone who could design an item of jewellery to brighten them up. First prize of a £125 jewellery voucher to spend beautifying himself at the expense of H Samuels goes to **Matthew Hook** of Rocky Lane, Worcestershire. The second prize winner, who will pick up a fifty quid sparklies chitty, was **Claire Ritchie**, of Arthur View Crescent, EH22 1NQ and the third prize of a £25 worth of glittering goodies will soon be adorning **Peter Cousins** of Shirley Avenue in Kent.

ADVENTURE CHART WRITE-IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode T SHIRT SIZE ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

T SHIRT SIZE ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



SYNTHETIC MAN CHANGES NAPPY

Macabre Mechlabs infested with genetic horrors hinder Solo, a synthetic man, and Nejo, a human baby as they fight their way through the nightmare zones created by Wardlock the Machine Sorcerer to house his ghastly flesh experiments, the Globewels and Bloberites.

An outstanding achievement of graphics and animation, *PRODIGY*, takes you into the Mechlabs of Mechworld where you must guide Solo the Syntleman through the Ice Zone, Fire Zone, Tech Zone and Vegie Zone, in his quest for escape.

Solo has to look after the needs of Nejo, cleaning him up, feeding him and protecting him as they make their way through intelligent mazes, teleporters, buildings with strange geometries and the uncanny vegetation created by the sorcerer Wardlock, who, as a machine being, is malevolent towards organic life.

PRODIGY is a game which demands compassion, guts and intelligence in ways no other game does.

FEATURES

Intelligent Mazes.

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FROM NAMTIR RAIDERS, TO A BIT OF BOVVER WITH BEARS THEN ON TO BAT-MAN . . . AND BEYOND

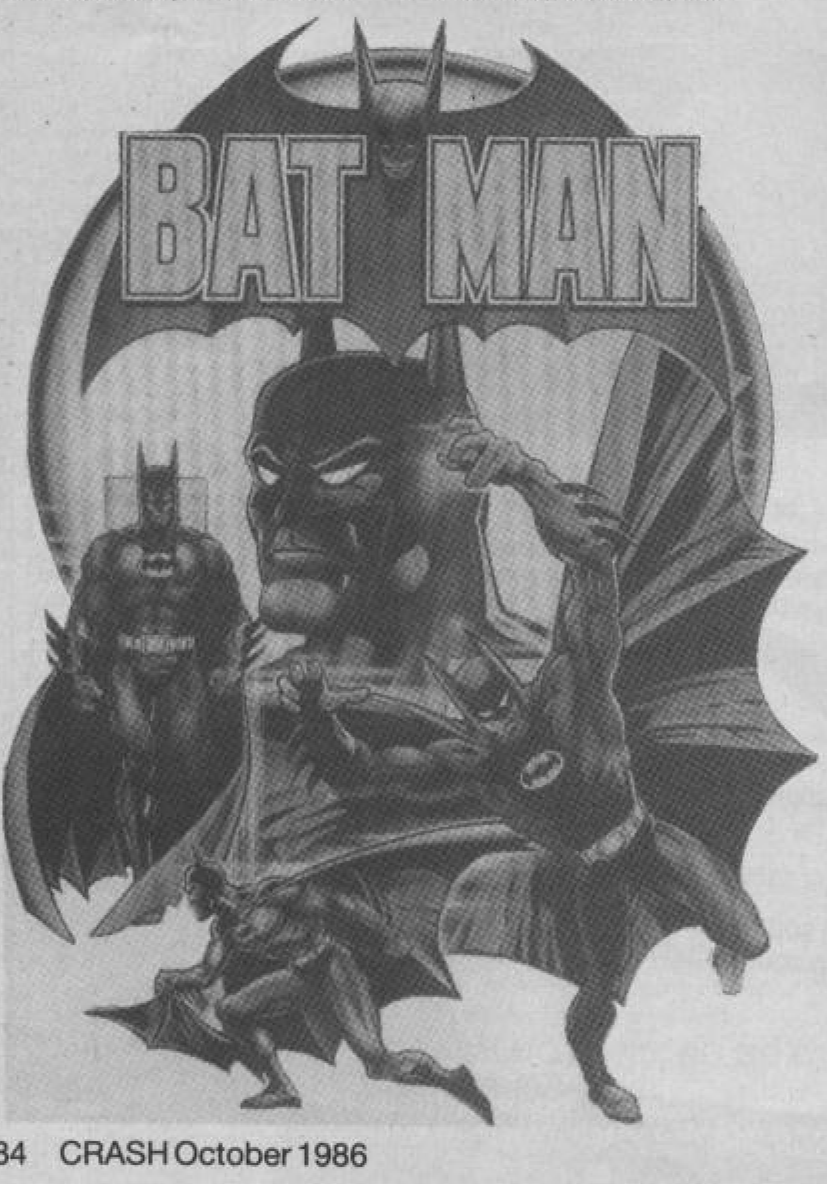
As was so often the case, it all began with a ZX81. JON RITMAN was working as a TV engineer with Radio Rentals when they decided to do some market trials on renting out Ataris. Thinking there would be a need for specialist engineers if home micros caught on, Jon bought himself a ZX81 in January 1982 to find out for himself what these computers were all about . . .



The bearded Jon Ritman takes a half-time break from being interviewed and joins MATCH DAY co-creator Chris Clarke for a bit of fresh air. The duo are "Over the Moon, John" at the prospect of transferring their programming skills to a new football simulation for the Spectrum, and expect to be signing with High Street stores in time for Christmas

The bug caught Jon very quickly — he spent a week staying up till two in the morning, motoring through the manual that came with the ZX81, then scampered out and bought a RAMpack and a book on machine code.

Within six months, Jon's first game was complete and *Namtir Raiders* (Ritman backwards, ged-dit?) was launched by ARTIC. Then the Spectrum came along and Mr Ritman, flushed with the success of his first attempt at serious games programming, wrote a Spectrum game — *ARG*. It was never released, but his second Spectrum game, *Cosmic Debris* made it into the shops on the ARTIC label before CRASH appeared in newsagents. Three more Ritman games were published by ARTIC during 1983 — *3D Combat Zone, Dimension Destructors* and *Bear Bovver. Bear Bovver* established Jon as a class Spectrum programmer, scoring 90% Overall in the days before Smashes (Issue 3), it was a highly addictive platforms and ladders game with state-of-the-art animation and excellent graphics. Mr Ritman was soon to referred to as "Ace Programmer" on the pages of computer magazines. . . .



In 1983 **Chris Clarke**, one of the founder members of CRYSTAL COMPUTING which evolved into the present day DESIGN DESIGN, moved to ARTIC, working on the business side of games software, rather than as a programmer. Chris and Jon and were involved in the marketing of *Bear Bovver* and they got chatting about the sort of games that should be written on the Spectrum. They reckoned a good football game was called for.

The duo looked at the Commodore 64 game, *International Soccer*, and talked to distributors who backed up their theory that what the Spectrum needed was a decent footie game. Chris had been programming on a ZX81, and after a bit of thought he and Jon decided to go it alone, leave ARTIC and write that Spectrum football game.

One week after they started serious work, ARTIC released *World Cup Football*. Disaster loomed up large . . . or did it? "We weren't too worried, once we had seen it", Jon confesses.

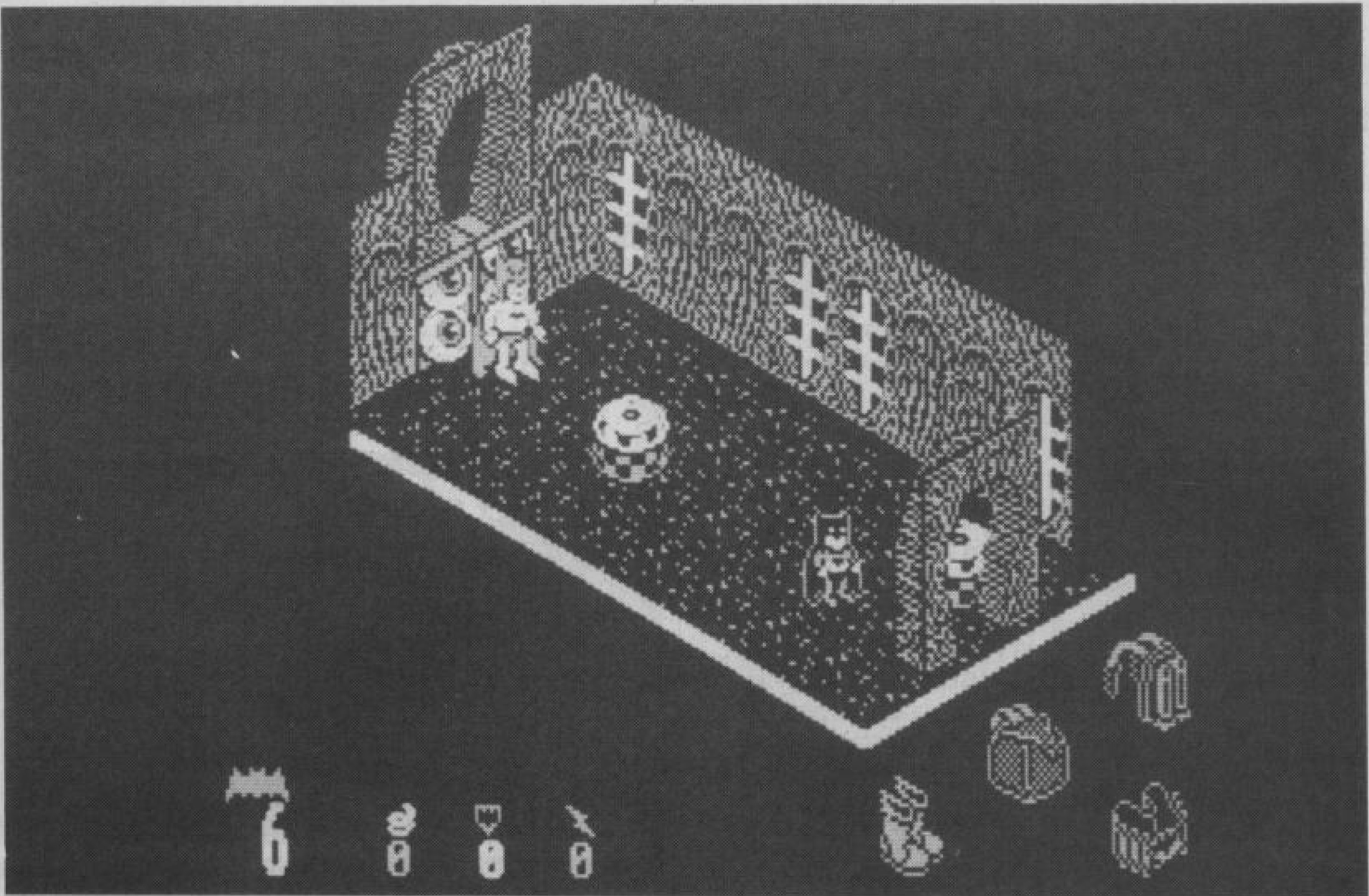
Jon and Chris beavered away at *Match Day*, confident that they could write a highly playable football game. When it arrived, before Christmas two years ago, the CRASH reviewers were well impressed but didn't quite give the game a Smash. A mistake. A mistake that we all now admit in CRASH Towers — more than eighteen months after it was first released, *Match Day* still makes regular appearances in the Hotline Chart and Lloyd still gets the odd nagging letter, saying the we under-rated it way back in Issue 13! A definite classic . . .

Jon's basic approach to writing a game explains, in part, why *Match Day* is still so popular. "I don't like games with difficult controls — it's like having an adventure that doesn't understand words. I like producing a good game, and I'm a perfectionist. One of my specialities is playing games, I suppose, and I get annoyed if there are too many controls to a game or if it's not fun to play. I get really aggravated, so when it comes to writing a game I take a lot of care in getting the feel right."

Jon starts a new programming project by planning the gameplay — some programmers are programmers first of all, and tend to write for their own technical satisfaction: they're keen on programming and gameplay often comes second. Simon Bratell, of DESIGN DESIGN works that way round, and finds a game to go with a technically excellent programming feat.

"I build the gameplay first and then fit a story around it in the last week. People who just write a game to a scenario have got it all wrong in my opinion . . . we ended up spending nearly all the time getting the gameplay right on *Match Day*."

Match Day was very successful, which took some of the financial pressures from the Ritman budget and Jon found he could afford to work at a more leisurely pace. "I



A classic 3D game: BATMAN. Jon Ritman writes his Z80 code in a modular fashion on his development system, with the screen, keyboard and sound routines as separate modules that interact with the core code. Although he writes for the Spectrum, when it comes to converting to other Z80 based machines like the Amstrad or Einstein, it's a matter of weeks rather than months to get the conversion running

saw *Knight Lore* soon after I'd finished work on *Match Day* and decided 'this is the sort of world I like to see a game in — it's just like playing a Disney cartoon' '' The germ of an idea that became *Batman* nearly eighteen months later had been sown . . . Serious work on the new game began around Easter last year.

Jon worked with a friend of his, **Bernie Drummond** on the *Batman* project — ''Bernie used to draw just for fun,'' Jon explained, ''and I asked him if he would be interested in doing some graphics for me. He agreed, and I let him have a copy of my drawing utility for the Spectrum. A couple of days later he came up with the first *Batman* graphics.

''Bernie works in an unusual way — he just sort of scribbles randomly on the screen and then looks to see what's there. It's a bit like the Rorschach test, where people are shown ink blots and asked if they can see pictures in them. Bernie might spot something that looks like, say, an eyebrow and start building up a character. Two hours later he's got a finished graphic! He's a perfectionist too, though, and can easily spend a day changing a couple of pixels.''

Batman took an awful long time to write. ''I tend to work in intense spurts,'' Jon admitted, ''I don't like to put a problem down until it is solved. And I did have three months off between August and October last year — I just wanted a rest . . . There was a one month delay over the licence as well — *Batman* is **not** a superhero — he's got no superpowers — he's a detective. The people who own the rights are very careful about what they let people do and everything had to go to the States first for approval.''

Batman wasn't a stunningly original game in terms of concept, but it fared very well at the hands of reviewers — the game has appeared on the Spectrum, Amstrad, Amstrad PCW and on the Einstein. ''It's difficult to create something different. There are only six or so basic types of game, and three of them are down to ULTIMATE — I have got a lot of respect for them. As games designers, Chris and I are always looking for new directions in terms of gameplay but it is difficult to move off in a new direction. I'm not an innovator — I take a synthesis of good points. With *Batman*, take a room for instance: everything you need to solve it is in the room. I try to design a game for everyone, for the games buying public. I get a lot of satisfaction from writing a game and pleasing people — although the money's nice!'', Jon adds.

''A lot of people spend six or eight months on a game and then two or three days at the end, putting the rooms together. The end result may be technically good, but the gameplay is often bad — people seem to get fed up with a project and want to get it out of the door. I can never really tell how long it will take to complete an original game. In the last week of the project I get some friends along to play the game and then alter it — in the case of *Batman*, I swapped a lot of rooms around when my girlfriend had played it.

''It's difficult to remember that not all players are experienced game players, and not everyone has seen *Knight Lore* in the case of *Batman* for instance. I need to watch someone who's never played that sort of game before — the most simple problems take some people ages to work out.''

What of the future? Nowadays, the team or project approach with lots of people co-operating on a single game seems to be popular with some companies. Could Mr Ritman find himself in a staff job as part of a team, rather than a freelance working at home in front of his Micro Mini development system? ''No. The trouble with the team approach is that the game designer doesn't know the limitations of the programming. I enjoy being a jack of all trades, playing the intellectual/technical role if you like, as well as the creative side. I look at the market an then add technical expertise.''

No doubt *Match Day* fans have already spotted the *Match Day* challenge laid down by Chris and Jon — we should be inviting a selected few high-scoring readers to Ludlow for a play off against the programmers in the next few weeks. Jon and Chris still play *Match Day* themselves, but against humans rather than against the computer: ''I can still play *Match Day* against a human; it's no fun playing *Batman* or *Match Day* against the machine any more. In the next football game I hope to have the machine intelligence at a level where I won't be able to beat it . . . ''

Next football game? Yes it's true! The men who brought you *Match Day* are currently working on a football simulation which has the working title *Three and In* because the gameplay follows the rules of Three and In! Bernie Drummond has been roped in to help on the graphics and Chris and Jon hope to have the game ready in time for this Christmas. There will be two players to each side, and the animations are going to be large. At the start, the first task is to pick your team — the computerised footballers each have their own playing and passing skills, and the choice of players will influence the outcome of a game. One, two or three people will be able to play. It's early days in the development at the moment — but Jon is keen to get as much realistic detail into the game as possible: the players will run around looking behind them, for instance.

''I wanted to incorporate machine intelligence into *Three and In*'', Jon explained, ''but I was a bit scared to begin with. Then I sorted out a few lines of code which basically instructed the computer player to run for the ball and then kick it. Thirty seconds after the little program had been loaded, it scored a goal against me. I laughed for fifteen minutes . . . ''

Foot and Mouth is the other game currently under production at chateau Ritman. The game stars the two halves of a symbiotic creature — Foot, and Mouth — and they look like a human being split at the waist when they are together. F and M have been split apart by an evil being, and the ultimate aim is for them to reunite. Each half the the composite creature has special abilities and there will be two control methods in the game, one for Foot and one for Mouth.

The game is going to use the same 3D viewpoint as *Batman*, and will be room-based, only this time Jon is aiming for at least three hundred rooms. Three kinds of puzzle are planned for *F&M* — one kind of puzzle that Foot can solve, one that Mouth can overcome and a third that can only be solved by Foot and Mouth together, once they have been reunited as a composite being.

Two games from 'Ace Programmer' Jon Ritman in time for Christmas! Now there's a treat for *Match Day* and *Batman* fans . . .

TECH NICHE



Mr Bates takes a peek at a couple of books from the BABANI stable, invites you to do a bit of delving into the works of DATEL's sound sampler and rounds up some 128 musical software. Next month he reports on a micro music show . . .

SEE HOW THEY RUN
. . or 48 into 128 won't go

As one or two of you have been at pains to point out to me (and as our TECH TIPS wunderkind has explained) not all music software and hardware runs in the 48K mode of the 128. What is needed here, I thought, is a swift roundup of the more common music utilities and a bit of advice on what to do if yours won't run on your newly prized 128. Just for good measure I've thrown in some previews of what will be happening on the 128 music field.

Some *SpecDrum* owners will find that their beloved drums won't run on the 128. These non-compatible units come from the first batch of *SpecDrums* made. When you bought it is not terribly important as it has to do with stock rotation in particular stores and areas that determines which version you have. However the fault is easily remedied by sending your old software and a cheque or postal order for £1.99 to CHEETAH MARKETING, 1 Willowbrook Science Park, Crickhowell Road, St Mellons, Cardiff, whereupon it will be instantly modified. If you actually bought the *SpecDrum* with the intention of running it on the 128, then a suitable pleading letter should persuade CHEETAH to do the upgrade for free. Jolly decent is what I say!

The DATEL Sound Sampler has further problems as the hardware needs to be modified because the 128 interface routes the power to different pins. Those of you wishing to update your sampler can do so by returning the hardware complete with £4 to DATEL, Units 8/9, Fenton Industrial Estate, Dewsbury Road, Fenton, Stoke-On-Trent, for complete 128 sampling satisfaction.

I managed to catch DATEL in the midst of programming a completely revamped sound sampler for the 128 with many extra features including easier command mode, greater band width response and filtering, sound samples dump to tape and up to 3 seconds worth of sampling. As of my phone call it will have a sample edit and loop option as well as a 90 note sequencer. All this and more to be reviewed in a forthcoming issue.

Since the demise of Wham! the duo, MELBOURNE HOUSE now market *Wham! The Music Box* as *The Music Box*. No problems are reported on compatibility but a new 128 version is available a full review should appear on these hallowed pages soon.

Other companies reported no problems, XRI and EMR's MIDI interfaces seem quite happy as does ROMANTIC ROBOT's *Music Typewriter*. *Olivers Music Box*is in the pipeline for the 128. From the smaller companies I spoke to, the general reaction seems to be one of waiting to see which way the Sugary winds will blow in favour of the 128 and its marketing future. More companies are being chased even as you read this, and news on updates and modifications will be brought to you posthaste.

TALKBACK

In quick response to my request for Spectrum-generated tunes, a couple of compositions worth a mention have turned up in CRASH Towers: First off the mark was **Ernie Pollard** from Liverpool who, with a modicum of equipment and a DATEL Sound Sampler has derived a pretty neat tape of toons that creates a nice atmosphere. (Maybe grounds for a competition here — who can come up with the most original and creative tape using only the DATEL). Like other owners of the sampler, he asks several questions which TECH TIPS and I are co-ordinating closely on. We should come up with a few answers soon — Mr Goodwin has the CRASH DATEL at present for in-depth destruction testing! News from owners regarding their own modifications to the rather inadequate software would be welcome, so we can share the knowledge . . .

MACHISMO AND THE ART OF ZED80

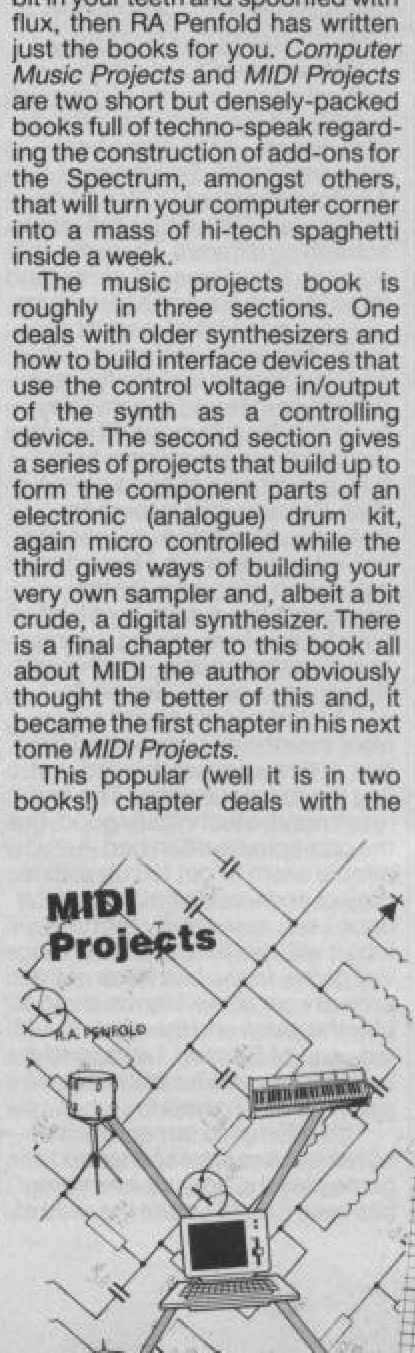
If you were born with a soldering bit in your teeth and spoonfed with flux, then RA Penfold has written just the books for you. *Computer Music Projects* and *MIDI Projects* are two short but densely-packed books full of techno-speak regarding the construction of add-ons for the Spectrum, amongst others, that will turn your computer corner into a mass of hi-tech spaghetti inside a week.

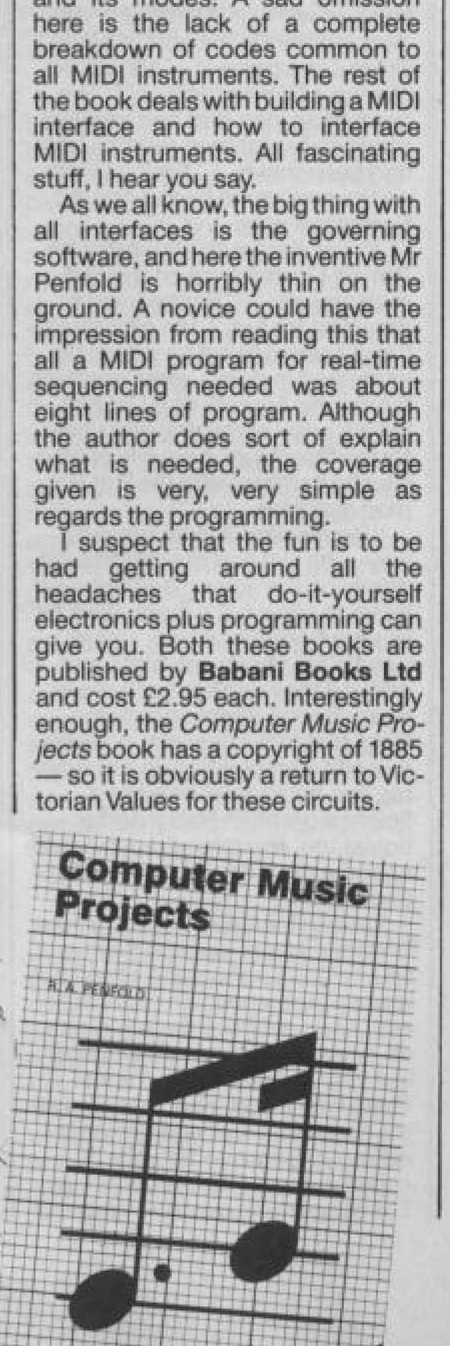
The music projects book is roughly in three sections. One deals with older synthesizers and how to build interface devices that use the control voltage in/output of the synth as a controlling device. The second section gives a series of projects that build up to form the component parts of an electronic (analogue) drum kit, again micro controlled while the third gives ways of building your very own sampler and, albeit a bit crude, a digital synthesizer. There is a final chapter to this book all about MIDI the author obviously thought the better of this and, it became the first chapter in his next tome *MIDI Projects*.

This popular (well it is in two books!) chapter deals with the basic format and protocol of MIDI and its modes. A sad omission here is the lack of a complete breakdown of codes common to all MIDI instruments. The rest of the book deals with building a MIDI interface and how to interface MIDI instruments. All fascinating stuff, I hear you say.

As we all know, the big thing with all interfaces is the governing software, and here the inventive Mr Penfold is horribly thin on the ground. A novice could have the impression from reading this that all a MIDI program for real-time sequencing needed was about eight lines of program. Although the author does sort of explain what is needed, the coverage given is very, very simple as regards the programming.

I suspect that the fun is to be had getting around all the headaches that do-it-yourself electronics plus programming can give you. Both these books are published by **Babani Books Ltd** and cost £2.95 each. Interestingly enough, the *Computer Music Projects* book has a copyright of 1885 — so it is obviously a return to Victorian Values for these circuits.





TECH TIPS



This month Simon Goodwin passes on tips for 128 owners, programmers, SpecDrummers and joystick junkies.

SHORT AND SWEET — Tips Galore

MORE 128 SECRETS

Back in June I explained how Spectrum 128 owners could use some new editing functions without splashing out £20 on a keypad. Since then several readers have been experimenting; I can now pass on details of 13 'secret' functions which you can access by pressing combinations of keys on the new machine. Some of the new codes have the same effect as my original ones but they're easier to enter as they don't use GRAPHICS mode.

The table lists the functions independently discovered by **Charles Willbe** and **David Clark**. **Michael Pacey** also found five of these.

There's just one keypad function which no one has been able to find on the standard keyboard — the signal to move the cursor ten lines down the listing. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who has tracked this down.

Undocumented Spectrum 128 editing functions.

Function	Keys
Beginning of next word	EXTEND SHIFT J
Beginning of previous word	EXTEND I
Up ten lines	EXTEND P
Down ten lines	Unknown!
Start of line	EXTEND SHIFT 2
End of line	EXTEND M
First line	EXTEND N
Last line	EXTEND T
Swap between screen areas	EXTEND SHIFT 8
Delete this character	EXTEND SHIFT K
Delete word to the left	EXTEND E
Delete word to the right	EXTEND W
Delete to start of line	EXTEND K
Delete to end of line	EXTEND J

BREAKING NEWS

In July I printed some tips on disabling the Spectrum BREAK key. I've had a flood of letters saying that the best answer is POKE 23613,82. That makes the Spectrum ignore the BREAK key completely — but, as I suggested originally, it's not much good in serious programs, because it loses its effect after GO SUB, RETURN, RUN and CLEAR, and it probably won't work at all if you've loaded anything into the top of memory.

Mark Jones came up with the best compromise between this and my original suggestions. His code causes the computer to reset if BREAK is pressed. CLEAR and RUN disturb it, but GO SUB and RETURN work fine.

Mark's tip overwrites the 'return address' on the stack, which it finds by looking in the system variables. Unlike the others, it works when there's code in the top of memory, as long as you CLEAR space before you execute these lines:

```
LET TOP = PEEK 23730 + 256*
PEEK 23731-3
POKE TOP, O:POKE TOP + 1,0
```

You can make the computer run a machine code routine, instead of resetting, if you put the address of the routine at T and T+1. This can be useful if you're using a bit of BASIC to save and load information from a program that's mainly written in machine code.

STEREO SPECDRUMMING

I've been playing with the 'synchro' feature of the *SpecDrum* recently — this lets you control the timing of the machine with recorded clicks. If you've got a multi-track tape recorder you can build up stereo drum patterns very quickly. I've been using a Vesta Fire MR10, although the trick will work just as well with a Fostex X-15 or any other multi-track recorder. A normal stereo recorder is no good, because you need at least three parallel tracks.

Start off by writing a mono drum pattern, containing all the sounds you want to use. Save the result for reference on one cassette track and the timing pulses from the Spectrum cassette port on another track. Then edit the pattern, deleting all the drums which you only want to appear on the 'left-hand' stereo track. Record the result on a third track, playing the timing pulses from the tape back into the cassette port so that the recordings are properly synchronised.

Finally, re-load the original pattern and remove all the drums which you want on the 'right-hand' track only. Synchronise and record the result. If you play the last two recordings through the Right and Left speakers of a HiFi you'll get a brilliant stereo effect.

Code to replay Specdrum samples.

```
1000 RESTORE 1050: BASE = 59000
1010 FOR I = BASE TO BASE + 23
1020 READ C: POKE I, C: NEXT I
1030 STOP
1050 DATA 17, 0, 12, 33, 175, 104, 243, 6
1060 DATA 9, 16, 254, 62, 128, 134, 211, 31
1070 DATA 35, 27, 122, 179, 32, 241, 251, 201
1100 POKE BASE + 2, 8 + 4* (T=130 OR T=132)
1110 POKE BASE + 8, 9
1120 PAUSE 0: RANDOMIZE USR BASE: GO TO 1120
1200 POKE BASE + 2, 8 + 4* (T=130 OR T=132)
1210 FOR I=1 TO 14
1220 POKE BASE+8, I
1230 RANDOMIZE USR BASE: NEXT I
1240 STOP
```

NEW RHYTHM METHOD

If you hate perfectly-timed robot drumming you may be interested in another neat synchro trick. It's easy to change the tempo of a whole song but, on the face of it, there's no way for the *SpecDrum* to give the variations in tempo that a real drummer could produce. **M Hopkins** has the answer!

First enter your song into the *SpecDrum*, then set up your cassette to record in the usual way. Select the main menu and tap briskly on the F or S keys, varying the rhythm as you wish. Every time you press or release the key a short timing pulse is recorded. Tap your way through the whole song, then play the pulses back into the computer with Synchro turned on — the drums will play, keeping perfect time with the tapping you recorded.

M Hopkins reckons that you could get a similar effect by recording short BEEPs generated from BASIC, but he hasn't tried this yet.

NEW IDEAS

Several people have written in asking about *SpecDrum* sound editor programs. In June I printed a tiny machine code routine that lets you ▶

load and save *SpecDrum* sounds, editing them at will. The code was the bare bones of my own sound editing program; many readers have added extra features of their own.

We don't print long listings in CRASH, and we're not going to change that rule — printing is a silly way to distribute software. I'll continue to mention what people have done, so that their discoveries can trigger further innovations. Maybe we'll put together a Tech Tips tape one day soon, rather like the Playing Tips cassette . . . who knows?

SPECDRUM EFFECTS

Lots of people want to work the *SpecDrum* hardware from their own programs. In response to much pestering I've written 24 bytes of machine code which can be used to play ANY sample through the *SpecDrum* hardware, with no need for CHEETAH's own software. The new code will work anywhere in the top 32K of memory.

The code assumes that the sample has been loaded with the routine printed in the June CRASH. You can read the sample from another address if you make appropriate changes to the fifth and sixth code bytes. Likewise you play groups of samples by loading them one after another and adjusting the total sample length, stored in the second and third bytes of the code.

Best of all, you can change the pitch of recorded sounds by POKEing different numbers into the ninth byte of the code. The value 9 gives the normal pitch; smaller numbers give higher pitches (apart from 0) and higher numbers give deep sounds. The POKE changes the speed at which the sample is played back.

This code could be used to play back absolutely any sound with HiFi quality, as long as you can write the sound as a sequence of volume levels. You could add brilliant sampled effects to arcade games. Of course, only *SpecDrum* owners would get the benefit, but the *SpecDrum* is very popular, so it should be worthwhile for someone to produce a game with *SpecDrum* effects. If you play with the new code you'll quickly realise how good this could sound.

Use the routine listed in June to load a sound. Then GO TO 1000, to store the replay routine at address 59000.

Alter the value of BASE if 59000 is not a convenient address. GO TO 1100 will play back the sound whenever you press a key. GO TO 1200 will play it back at steadily decreasing pitch; this sounds good with a tuneful sound, like one of the timbales from the Latin kit. Lots of other interesting effects are possible.

CHARACTER STUDIES

Miles Jacobson and **Stephen Hill** have written in to ask how they can redefine the entire character set used by the Spectrum, rather than just the 21 user-defined graphics.

The first step is to load your chosen character set into memory. A standard set contains 96 characters, from code 32 (space) to code 127 (copyright). Each character definition consists of 8 bytes, just as for a user-defined graphic. So the whole font takes up 96 * 8 = 768 bytes.

Assuming there's nothing already loaded, CLEAR 64599 will reserve space for a font from location 64600 upwards. From now on I'll say BASE instead of 64600 — substitute whatever address you have chosen.

If you've already designed a new font, use LOAD "" CODE BASE to load it. Otherwise it's a good idea to copy the standard font into the new memory, so that you can see what you're doing as you re-define characters. This code copies the standard font:

```
FOR I = 0 TO 767: POKE I + BASE, PEEK (I + 15616): NEXT I
```

Finally, you must force the computer to use the new font, rather than the old one. You do this by POKEing a value 256 less than BASE into addresses 23606 and 23607:

```
POKE 23606, BASE-256*INT (BASE/256)
POKE 23607, INT (BASE/256)-1
```

You can now redefine any character by POKEing addresses from BASE onwards. The first eight bytes describe the SPACE character, so POKE BASE + 7, BIN 01010101 will put a dotted line at the bottom of every space character, and so on.

AUTOFIRE

This month's £20 of software goes to **Jamie Neil**, who has worked out how to adapt any joystick interface to work with an 'autofire' joystick, like a *Quickshot II*. You should not make this modification unless you're using an autofire joystick, and there's no point making it if the autofire already works.

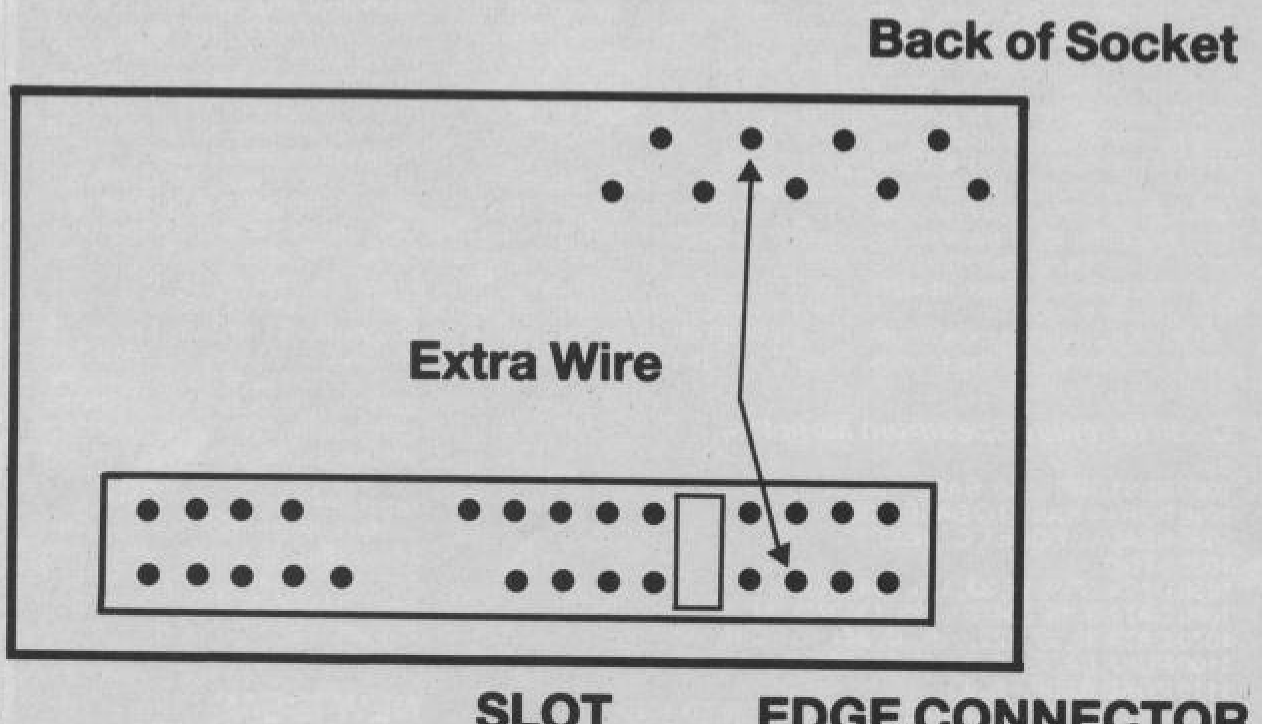
The autofire circuit needs a five volt power supply in order to work. This power must be sent down a pin on the joystick socket which is not normally used. The required pin is the second from the left in the row of four, if you view the socket from inside the joystick interface on the solder side of the board — with the row of four pins below the row of five.

To make the autofire circuit work Jamie just soldered a wire from the 5 volt supply on the edge connector to the relevant pin on the back of the board. The five volt supply is on the lower side of the edge connector, on the third pad from the right. There should be one other pad between the 5 volt one and the slot in the edge connector.

The diagram shows where to solder the wire. The orientation of the joystick socket may vary depending upon the make of your interface, but the wire always goes to the same pin. Don't connect the wire if that pin already appears to be used — you might short out some special function of your interface.

AUTOFIRE JOYSTICK WIRING:

View from solder side of interface circuit board



NB The joystick socket may be the other way up on some interfaces

END OF FILE

I'm in the throes of moving house at the moment, so this column has been written slightly ahead of schedule. I hope to be able to report on CHEETAH's long-awaited sound sampler next month.

I try to reply to as many letters as possible each month, but I can't promise to answer them all. Please don't ask me to design hardware or write programs just for you, because I haven't got the time. Secondly, please send an SAE if you want a personal reply. Write in if you'd like to add anything to comments this month or want to pass on a tip; a good suggestion could win you £20 worth of software of your choice.

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SPOT THAT MINSON AND WIN!

50 Copies of PIRANHA's Strike Force Cobra on offer!





WIN A DAY OUT PLAYING SOLDIERS.

Crash Competition

PIRANHA have just released *Strike Force Cobra* in which four commandos stomp around a robot infested complex trying to extricate a number of digits which make up a password that might just save the world. Naturally this mission is no easy task, so an elite group of mercenaries has been recruited for *Strike Force Cobra*. At the start of the game you have to choose who to include in this super-team from a list of names and case histories presented on the screen.

When the game was still being written, PIRANHA invited a few select members of the computer press along to become digitised. Sounds painful, but all it means is that certain 'celebrities' had their ugly mugs incorporated into the frontscreen of the game. And one was none other than our own hack/mercenary, the man with the dirt on everyone, John (Hunter S) Minson.

What we want you to do is tell us which of the mugshots on the Spectrum screenshot featured here is based on Mr Minson . . . It's not as easy as it might sound though, because John's visage was heavily painted and little bits were stuck on just to make identification a mite harder!

And there's more. We want you to come up with a colleague for "Mad" Joe Kawalski, Esther Stern and their chums. This could be a member of the CRASH team, or a fictitious Ramboid character of your very own creation. Whoever you decide should join the Strike Force team, send us a piccie (photo, drawing, digitised image or videotape — whatever you like) of them. Include a few lines of biography like the ones at the beginning of the *Strike Force Cobra* game, and we'll judge which onbe is best suited to join the team. (We've supplied an example here.)

And the prizes? Cooo, impress-ive. Two winners will get the chance to spend a day playing Combat Zone courtesy of PIRANHA. The idea of this is to fling yourselves around a combat area shooting the opposition. Fret not, gentle reader, for no blood is lost in this conflict. The guns used to shoot at 'the enemy' fire paint, not bullets, so by the end of the day a very messy time is had by all. The eventuial objective is to capture the opposition's flag and declare yourselves the victors. These two winners also collect their very own PIRANHA Sweatshirt, an all. . . .

ZZAP! and AMTIX are going to come along with their *Strike Force Cobra* winners, so the day should be a good one! We may even invite Melissa Ravenflame so that the battle of the Girly Tipsters can be sorted once and for all. She'll probably wimp out though, like she did at the PCW Show. . . .

Fifty copies of *Strike Force Cobra* go to the runners up, so don't be too disappointed if you don't collect one of the top two prizes. . . .

Send your entries to SPOT THE MINSON, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB so that they reach us no later that 23rd October. Make sure your entry fights to the top of the pile, eh?



NAME: Sergeant Ross "Crusher" McWatt
NATIONALITY: British
DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 8 June 1957, Glasgow, Scotland
HEIGHT: 5'10"
WEIGHT: 178 lbs
BACKGROUND: Combat experience with the Scots Guards during the Falklands campaign of 1982. Transferred to the SAS in 1983. Expert in counter hi-jack and hostage rescue techniques. Currently training NCO at SAS Hereford.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

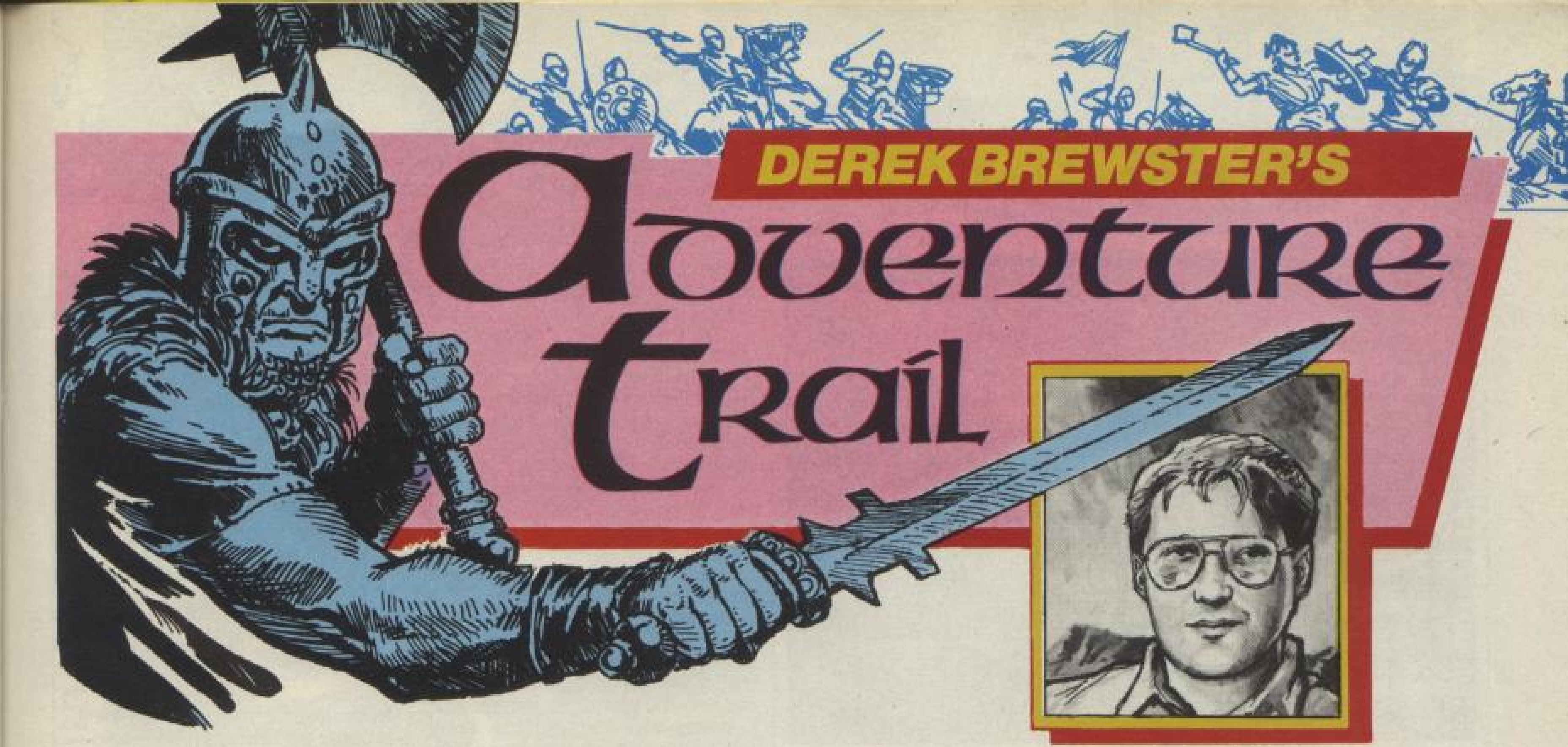
....

POST CODE.............. **SHIRT SIZE** ....

I THINK JOHN MINSON IS ....



ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
JOHN RICHARDSON
WELL, GOOD ON YOU, STANLEY! YOU WON THE CONKER CHAMPIONSHIPS AN' ALSO THE WHOLE PLANET!
ALL HAIL STANLEY THE CONQUEROR! BOY! THAT SURE IS A FOOL NAME!
SNIGGER!
HEH!
QUIT CALLIN' ME STANLEY! MY NAME IS NOT STANLEY! MY NAME IS JETMAN!
WHA...?
JETMAN? WHAT A HOOT!
WHAT A MEGAFOOL MONIKER!
IF THAT AIN'T THE DANGDEST WALLY NAME FO' A KING!
HOO-HAW!
WHEEE-HEE-HEE!
HICKY-HICKY HEE
WHOEVER HEARD OF A KING CALLED JETMAN THE CONQUEROR?
SNORT
HOW'S ABOUT, "JETMAN THE BEHEADER"?
HO!
HAW-HAW HAW-HAW! "JETMAN THE BEHEADER..."
HAW-HAW-HAW
HOKAY, PARROTMAN, LET'S YOU AN' ME GO LOOKIT MY PLANET KINGDOM...
AS YOU WISH, YOUR FOUL-TEMPEREDNESS, BUT I MUST WARN YOU THAT A BEING OF YOUR SORT MAY FIND THIS PLANET AN ITSY-WITSY-LI'L BIT... ER... ...UNHEALTHY
EH?
UNHEALTHY...? WHAT RUBBISH! THIS HERE PEACH IS D'LICIOUS! NOTHIN' UNHEALTHY 'BOUT THE FRUIT HERE ABOUTS...
THANK YO' SOAH!
'S OK
SHLOOP
SHLURP
GOOD OL' SOIL AROUND HERE, TOO! NOTHING UNHEALTHY 'BOUT THIS SOIL! IN FAC' I WANNA KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU FIGURE IS UNHEALTHY AROUND HERE!
ZIPP
POW
PUTCHOWWM
BAM
THE SNIPERS!
VEEEEE
BOOM
Y'SEE, THIS HERE PLANET IS IN REVOLT! IN FAC', IT'S THE MOS' REVOLTING PLANET IN THE UNIVERSE! THAT'S WHY I GOT TO WEAR THIS HERE BULLET PROOF JUMP-SUIT... IT'S A GOOD OL' SUIT IS THIS ONE... HAD IT FOR YEARS... NEVER LET ME DOWN ONCE...
LEMME IN THAT SUIT! LEMME IN, LEMME IN! Y'HEAR..? LEMME... THIS IS YO KING SPEAKING
C'MOUT!
LEMME IN!
C'MON OUT! LEMME IN!
BWA!
SHAN'T
SO HOW COME YOU WANTED TO WIN THIS PLANET SO BAD?
BLEET
HOOGH!
EASY...
I'M ON THEIR SIDE...
GAWSH! OUR REVOLTING HERO IS NOW A REVOLTING PRISONER OF A POWER-CRAZED LOONY PARROT..... CRAZEEEE!



DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

NEW STRATEGIES

It really can be fun to watch the microcomputer games world from a removed vantage point. I've touched upon this ground before but let's just have a little look at the latest manifestation of an age-old marketing dilemma.

If you have a listen to your local commercial radio station (for we must take the commercial airwaves as a suitable comparison), you will notice music programs concerned with Folk, Country & Western, and perhaps Jazz, tucked away at the end of the day's schedule. Most of the music on these programs is specialist interest with only the occasional well-known tune coming up. However, when a well-known tune does come up, you think no less of it for being on a specialist program, you just accept it for being the highly pleasant material it is. No-one thinks any worse of Sting for producing a jazz-inspired album, and it certainly was commercial, as its Number 1 position in the American charts testified.

Now, back to computer games, and we have another outbreak of the 'don't tell them it's an adventure we want it to sell like an arcade' syndrome. This mental angst has it that adventure games sell far less than arcade games BECAUSE they are not called arcade games, and takes no account of the facts which only relate how very poor adventures sell next to none and good adventures sell very well. It just so happens, due to the likes of the Quill, there are more opportunities for the uninitiated to produce poor adventures.

The syndrome is sad because many adventure games really do sell in tremendous numbers; Heavy on the Magick is a true adventure and it has maintained a healthy chart position for months. If it continues to do well no doubt it will cease to be an adventure and slide over to join Lords of Midnight in the 'successful strategy' camp.

Redhawk, from MELBOURNE HOUSE, was deemed too important to be classified as an adventure, and so was reviewed as a mainstream game. The game can not be counted a chart success and so the attempts to confuse games players, and to ensure no adventurer plays it, have presumably succeeded.

Dark Sceptre is the latest non-adventure about to hit the streets and the latest release not to take into account the public's total disregard for such classificatory pedantics — they will buy a good game no matter what the title. Let's hope for less text and graphic products, and more adventures.

MINDSTONE

Producer: **The Edge**
Price: **£8.95**
Author: **John Pitcher**

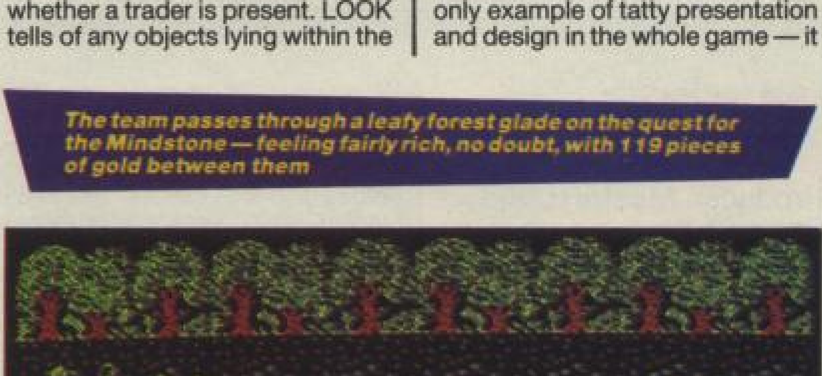
THE EDGE have brought a touch of class to the staid old adventure with a wide choice of options on play and some pretty pleasing graphics and sound effects. Loading up presents you with the options of Kempston/Sinclair Joystick or Keyboard control. Although the icon option with joystick and little on-screen arrow may be the slicker looking of the two, it is in fact the keyboard option which, once all the key assignments are mastered, plays the better.

You are Prince Kyle leading your band of loyal warriors in search of Nemesar, your younger brother, and the Mindstone he has stolen. Members of the trusty team which accompanies you are called upon by pressing numbers 1 to 4 in Keyboard Mode, a mode made all the more attractive by way of its keeping the strength and psyche attributes of a character up on the screen (making the **S** for Status key superfluous). Gold reserves are also shown on screen but this is the same for each team member as it is a team figure. The team consists of Kyle, who has average to high values for strength and psyche at the start, Merel, who has the highest strength but lowest psyche, Quin who averages in both, and Taina, who has the lowest strength but the highest psyche. Strength, clearly, is a measure of competence in combat but you may be puzzled at the word 'psyche' which turns out to be an indication of how well versed the character is in spell lore.

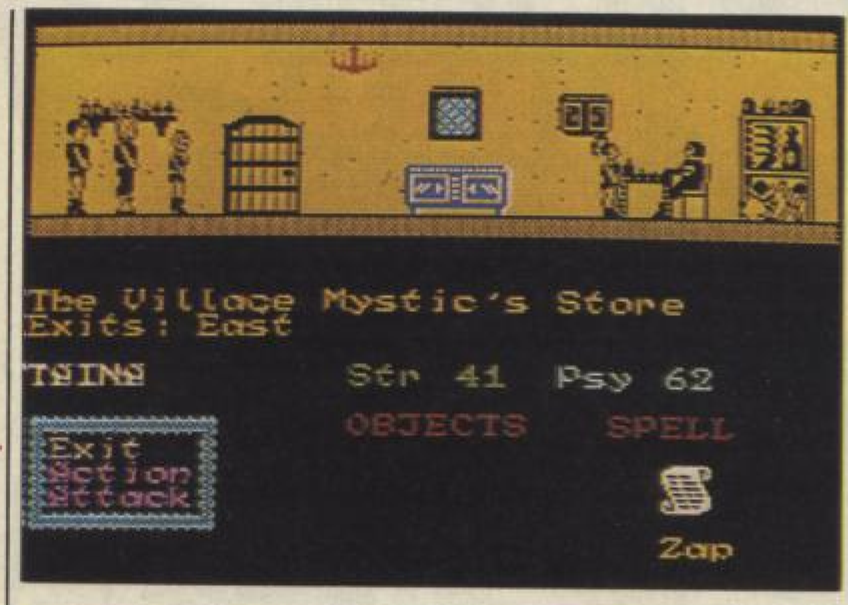
During play all attributes can be altered with strength being increased by eating and drinking, psyche assisted with meditation under the right conditions, and gold pieces can be accumulated by mining or alchemy. If you are finding it difficult to attain gold by these means it's worth noting how buying provisions and artefacts can be made less damaging by bartering, which entails offering slightly less for an item than has been quoted. For example, I acquired a Royal Orb from a pixie for the bargain price of 36 (a discount of 3 gold pieces) while a golden arrow cost 53 as opposed to the 56 gold pieces price quoted by a voyager.

EXAMINE and LOOK are two commands used often in this game. EXAMINE tells you something about the location you are in. It tells you if something is blocking your way (a crocodile, locked door, or block of ice and so on) or whether a trader is present. LOOK tells of any objects lying within the present location but spells, being of the magic world, are transparent to the LOOK command. Instead spells are indicated by a brief flash of a spotted square at the side of the screen, possibly the only example of tatty presentation and design in the whole game — it

The team passes through a leafy forest glade on the quest for the Mindstone — feeling fairly rich, no doubt, with 119 pieces of gold between them







Inside the village mystic's store. The pull down option menu and inventory overlay appear on the bottom half of the screen

very much has the look of a feature grafted on late in the developmental stage of the game. The 'hand' icon, indicating the presence of an object, isn't much better, and these two features together require a certain amount of vigilance for what is otherwise a slowly paced adventure game.

There is some animation within the picture window along the top third of the screen. A character selected to perform moves across the screen from far left to right either to take a drink from the bar, attack a wolf or an orc or whatever, or cast a spell to smooth the way. The animation wouldn't win any cartoon awards but is amusing enough.

Mindstone is a game which really impresses graphically. In play, as well, it is most engaging (although this comment can only be attributed to Keyboard Mode which is far more playable then the slicker looking Icon Mode) with some very pleasant sound effects. The game doesn't allow for the team to go their separate ways, and the poster on offer can only be described as a waste of paper (or a joke), but mostly everything else about *Mindstone* is truly impressive.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy
Graphics: good
Presentation: superb
Input facility: keyword or icon
Response: fast
General rating: slow start but really engaging once you get into it

Atmosphere	77%
Vocabulary	89%
Logic	93%
Addictive quality	86%
Overall	**89%**

ZZZZ

Producer: **Mastertronic**
Price: **£1.99**
Authors: **Clive Wilson & Les Hogarth**

You might, like myself, be pleased to learn that MASTERTRONIC do not put out *Quill*ed games in the belief that people, even at this price, expect better. Giving games players a little bit more is commendable as this offering not only has quite good graphics and a very readable redefined character set but also provides icon control over the common adventure commands. There are, unfortunately, a couple of things which let the side down.

The storyline isn't as appealing as it might be with the excuse that you're having a dream (see title) papering over a whole host of unconnected locations and problems. But by far the most damning fault of the game is the input system which almost defies a correct input. The auto repeat effect on entries and the curious DELETE system, which enters your input when you're trying to correct words, conspire against you to the extent where you feel like giving up before you've really started. On some occasions lines seem to enter themselves as if the computer was fed up with you struggling with the program's inadequate input routine!

The look of this adventure is really quite sophisticated for a £1.99 game. The icons are well-designed and fit nicely around the picture which, if not always detailed, is generally colourful. All of the compass directions can be chosen via arrow icons, cassette functions can be called upon via the quit icon and everyday adventure commands such as LOOK, ENTER, LEAVE, GET, DROP, EXAMINE, HELP, USE and PAUSE can be called upon via shapes ranging from a clenched fist and magnifying glass to a bed (this last is for PAUSE).

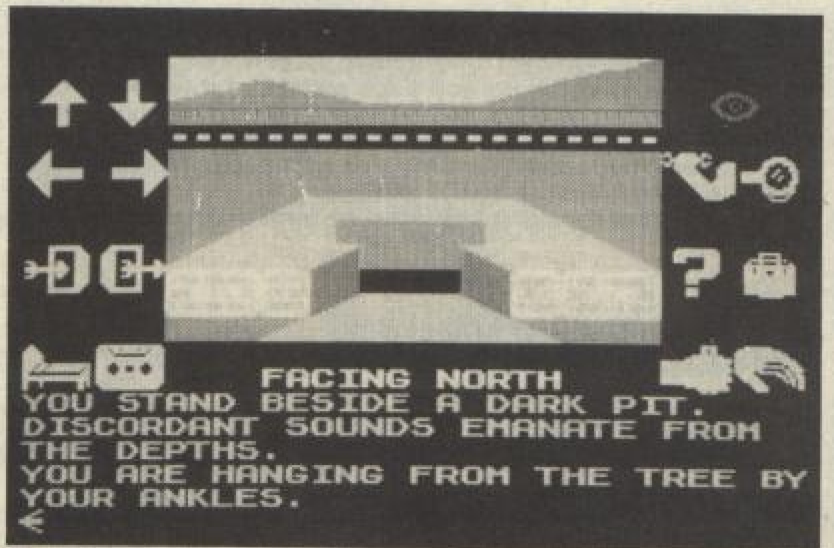
You kick off in the place where every human being is at their best — safely out of harm's way, happily snoring in bed. Here though, 'happily' may not be the right word as it looks like another adventure nightmare. *'A sudden thirst awakens you and rising for a drink you fall out of bed into an ocean. The bed drifts away into the mist. You see shoreline ahead'.* After struggling with the input system for ages you might pick up a spade, dig the sand and get a face smiling at you from a bucket. Avoiding the jaywalker's fate you might then get around to working out how the bike can be started, or perhaps you just push it away (well, I thought you deserve a clue if you've struggled with this input system for anything longer than five minutes). At the checkpoint you will no doubt meet the following: *'You step onto the gravel path but the crunch of your steps wakes the bandit and you are arrested for non-possession of passport. You are sentenced to hang from a tree until you wake'.* Needless to say, any attempt to do something as useful as CUT ROPE comes up with the witty 'Your sword is being repaired'.

ZZZZ is not such a good game because it fails in the one area which is vital to smooth, unruffled adventuring — a competent input system. This game's entry system is fraught with difficulties and one or two inconsistencies (like the question of the comment which says you can't go north when you had no recollection of attempting that direction). As such the game's viability must be questioned even at such a low asking price.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: the most difficult thing is coming to terms with the atrocious input system
Graphics: alright for a cheap game
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun and icon
Response: fast
General rating: flawed

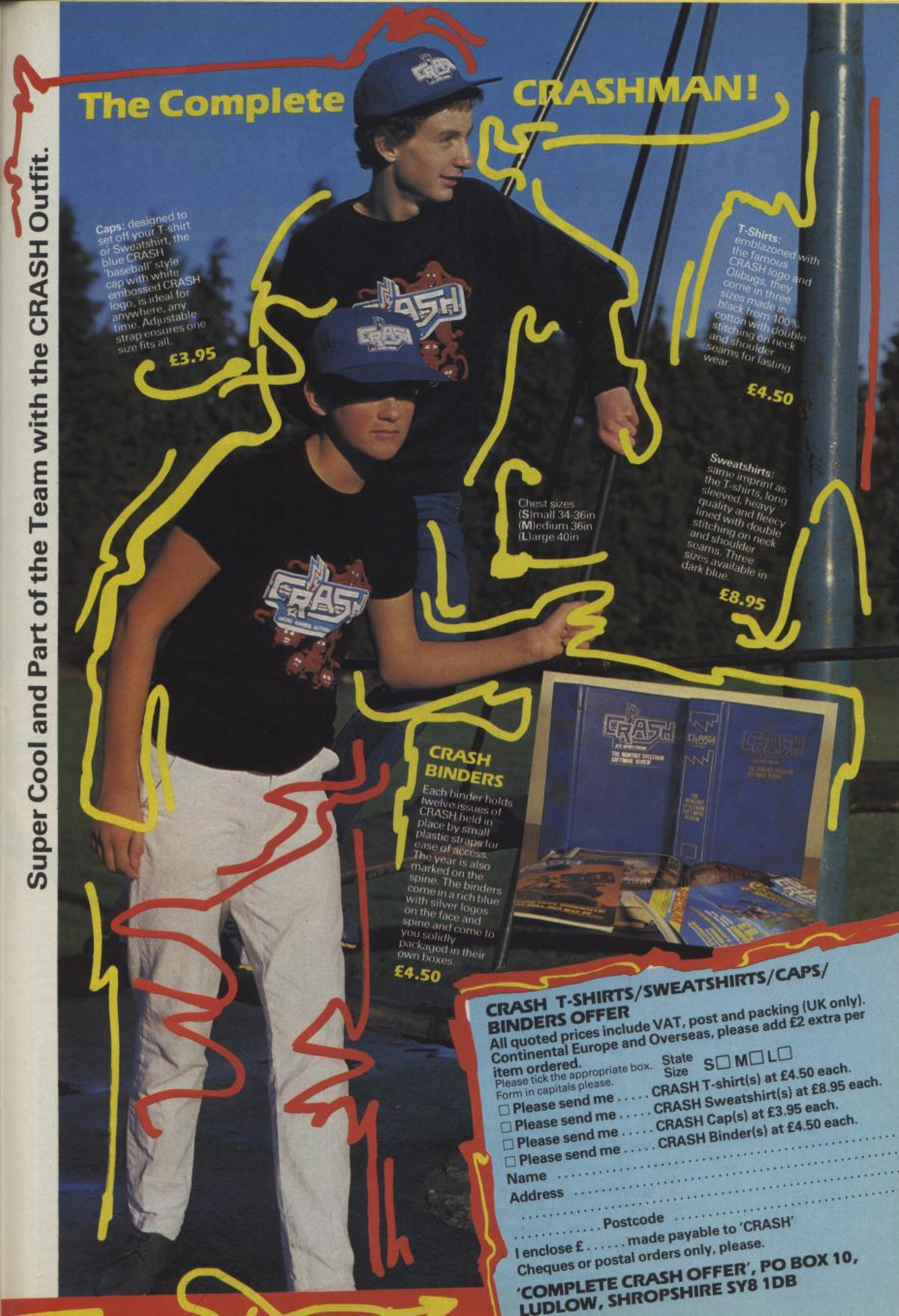
Atmosphere	45%
Vocabulary	50%
Logic	65%
Addictive quality	55%
Overall	**58%**



Hanging around by the ankles in the dreamworld that lurks behind your Spectrum screen in ZZZZ



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HUNCHBACK THE ADVENTURE

Producer: **Ocean**
Price: **£7.95**
Author:**Ian Weatherburn, Simon Butler**

As you might expect from a firm like OCEAN this is a step above the usual adventure game in terms of presentation. In many other respects, however, it is pretty run-of-the-mill stuff with the usual blend of objects and problems to be tied up together (although the first part of this three part adventure has more objects than problems). The game follows in the footsteps of its arcade namesakes, but this offering has more in common with *Never Ending Story*, what with its 'events' window on the left of the picture and up to six objects displayed on the right. These are laid on top of a tableaux depicting Notre Dame cathedral and can go as far as cartoon-like Biffs and Bops emanating from the scene where you, the hunchback, take on one of the many guards. As with *Never Ending Story*, I think the trendy display and atmospheric redesigned character set go a long way in compensating for any flat-footedness in plot.

In short Quasimodo has to find and rescue Esmerelda. This entails completing the three parts in the correct order. Firstly hunchback must escape from the cathedral set in the heart of Paris, made famous by the Victor Hugo novel of 1831. This involves side-stepping or disposing of the guards sent to harass you by the evil Cardinal and his spineless lackey the Bishop of Notre Dame. If you survive that ordeal you then make your way under the city of Paris until you reach the Cardinal's mansion. Finally you challenge the Cardinal and rescue your sweetheart Esmerelda.

Not only is the game itself polished but the instructions on the cassette inlay are truly superb. The story-telling and gamesplay is related in a much more professional way than is often the case with adventures, and useful details like acceptable verbs are included making it easier to make a proper attempt at the game.

Not all gamesplay is sweetness and light though; the silent key entry is error prone. This is in some way countered by the DELETE not needing the CAPS SHIFT depression, but not entirely. Another irritant is the lack of an EXAMINE command without which much of the interaction with the adventure is lost.

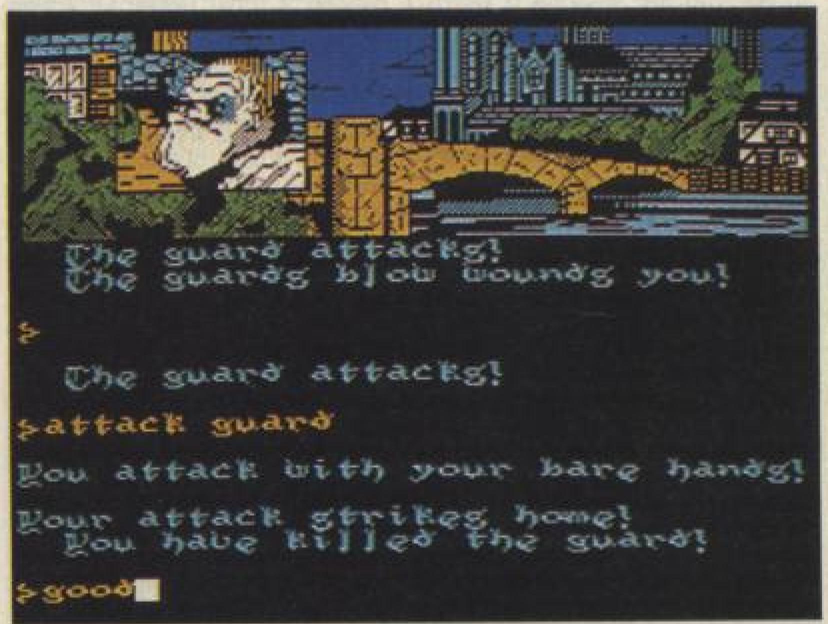
By the far the greatest offering *Hunchback* has as an adventure is its humour. Take these two location descriptions in the first part: *'Standing in the front aisle you can see to the east the altar and to the west the centre aisle which is pretty impressive considering you have only got one eye'* and *'You find yourself in a bedroom that is decorated in early gothic tack. The wallpaper is garish and clashes with the duvet, and the fluffy slippers are just too passe! . . . Lying on the ground is a strange tattered book entitled Evil Worshipping for Beginners'*. Even the Inventory list, which complements the picture tokens above, shows some good turns as in *'An old music book entitled Bell Ringing for the Deaf'* and how about *Zen and the Art of Guillotine Maintenance*, a book which no doubt predates the one all about flowers and motorbikes and how to link them by going loopy.

Hunchback the Adventure is an attractive, stylised adventure with much humour and a great amount to play, what with it coming in three parts. It won't enthral adventure freaks but it will keep many a novice chuckling before they get the hump.

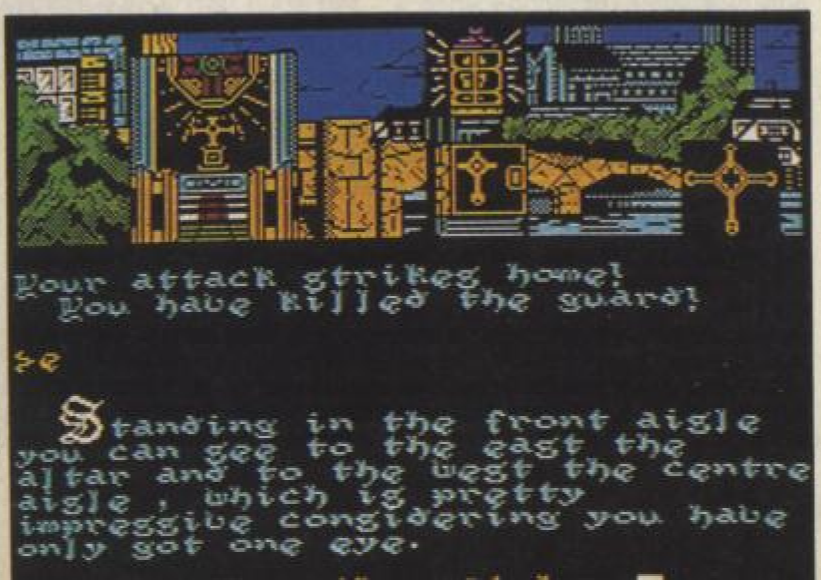
COMMENTS

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: unusual, very attractive
Presentation: very pleasant
Input facility: verb/noun ·
Response: fast
General rating: superior adventure

Atmosphere	90%
Vocabulary	78%
Logic	86%
Addictive quality	85%
Overall	**86%**



Scrapping with the guards in HUNCHBACK — not THE BOGGIT as you might expect from the little mistake in last month's column! Sorry. . . .



FUTUREZOO

Producer Clwyd Adventure Software
Price **£7.95**

A new company of keen adventurers, this one, set up to produce challenging adventures which keep to their own critical standards and provide value for money. There's only one thing wrong with the company's stated philosophy (ignoring the fact that this game is nothing special just for the moment) — the price of £7.95 is far and away above what other similar teams are asking for similar standard games.

In the middle of the 21st Century, after years of patient research, Hugo Skoltz, a brilliant scientist, finally succeeded in producing an interstellar drive unit theoretically capable of propelling a ship through space faster than the speed of light. The first ship to be fitted with the Skoltz drive was loaded up with a cargo of test animals and despatched under computer control to a destination eleven light years from Earth.

The test ship had been programmed to remain in the target area for 24 hours and then return, so the World settled down to wait for its expected reappearance, around 14 months after the departure. When the ship returned, its mission completed after only fifteen days, the human race now realised the shackles chaining it to Earth were gone. Man's age-old dream of conquering the stars was about to become a reality.

The race to build the new starships began. With the rapid advances in technology over the previous fifty years, the techniques required were already available and Governments, Private Corporations, in fact anyone who could raise the huge sums required, all became engrossed in Mankind's latest adventure. One by one, and manned now by human crews, the ships slipped away to explore the stars.

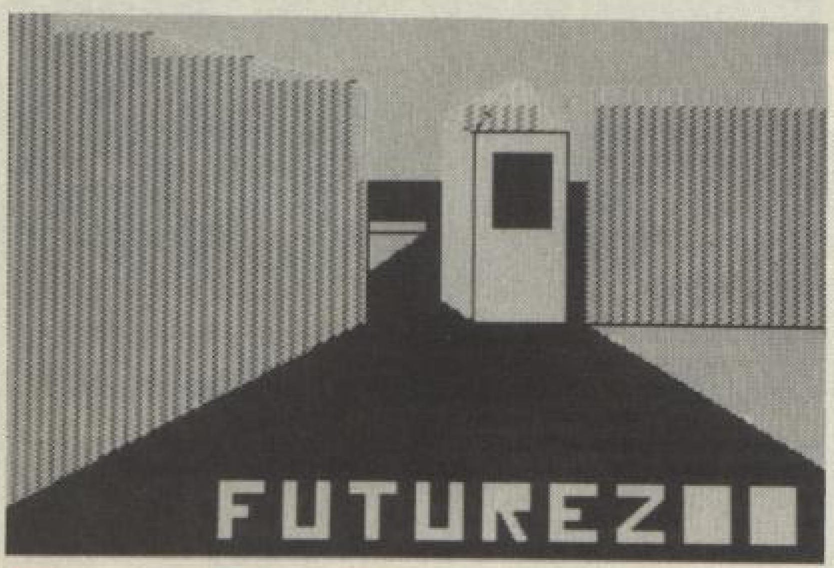
Yet the flow was not one-way. The great ships that now departed the Solar System with their cargoes of human seed did not return empty. The wealth of a hundred worlds flowed back to the Mother Planet and Earth became a world of plenty. Although a few specimens of alien life had already found their way to Earth it was not until 2130 that the idea of a vast zoo filled with such creatures was first conceived. Billed as the *Futurezoo* it met man's craving for ever more bizarre forms of entertainment but then, in the vicinity of a small and largely unregarded solar system, Mankind met the Senissa, a strange alien race of a similar technological level as Mankind.

Against the background of the ever-increasing threat of interstellar conflict, the two races signed a peace treaty during which the Great Seal of Senissa, a most revered artefact, was handed over to the Earthlings as a lasting tribute to the treaty. The Earth Ambassador took the next available flight home, a freighter transporting alien life-forms to *Futurezoo*. As unloading began on Earth a freak accident released the cargo to roam free aboard the ship. It was during the investigation into the accident that the Security Forces were alerted to the fact that one of the creatures destined for the *Futurezoo* had taken the Great Seal of Senissa. As head of the investigation you are the one now responsible for the Seal's safe return.

Being a sensible chappie you decide to begin your investigation at the *Futurezoo*. An inventory ▶



shows you are wearing a warm coat and a nearby robot is selling tickets. A shrewd player will have these swapped in no time to ensure access to the zoo grounds. No sooner have you entered the grounds when another passing robot gives you a raffle-ticket (all these robots seem a trifle careless with their tickets) which no doubt will be put to good use later. Sadly, it won't be long before you meet



The entrance to FUTUREZOO — what strange alien encounters lie before you?

another robot who isn't so friendly. It man-handles you out of the park whenever you trample on the flower borders or transgress (however unwittingly) the park's rules. Getting back in isn't an easy matter either. This is not the only danger as you wander round collecting the torch, spade, red fish and (totally unyielding) step ladders as a trip through the carnivorous plants building will soon show.

One of the better aspects of this game are the wonderfully evocative location descriptions, one of which runs like this: 'You are in the centre of a wide paved plaza, near a fountain which sprays water high into the air. Visitors sit at low tables nearby and several small children scamper after a ball thrown by a patient robot-nurse maid. To the west a row of red and yellow booths stands at the edge of the plaza'.

Futurezoo is a game which has been well presented for review but sadly the adventure is not quite up to scratch. In text-only adventures, the memory released from the chore of forming pictures can be expended on providing a deeper game with friendly vocabulary and atmosphere-creating EXAMINE and LOOK commands. Unfortunately *Futurezoo* has neither a friendly vocabulary, nor an EXAMINE command worth mentioning, and therefore can only be described as disappointing. The player feels alienated from the game as not much beyond 'Sorry, I don't understand. Try some different words' can be achieved in any reasonable length of time, and trying any other words doesn't seem to do anything. The lack of a HELP option just adds to the feeling of playing a most unhelpful adventure.

Only having the main compass directions (N, E ,S, W), and using a bright yellow background to the black print (like trying to read the print on a light bulb), with a conspicuous lack of proof reading are not damning features on their own, but put alongside the unfriendly vocabulary, in what is a text-only adventure, then the evidence for the prosecution becomes overbearing.

Futurezoo is available from **CLWYD ADVENTURE SOFTWARE**, 14 Snowdon Avenue, Bryn-y-Baal, Mold, Clywd CH7 6SZ.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: reasonably easy
Graphics: none
Presentation: poor, no highlights of inventory etc
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: its that quick *Quill* again!
General rating: poor; a story in need of an adventure programmer

Atmosphere	75
Vocabulary	30
Logic	65
Addictive quality	41
Overall	**43**

GRIMBLE

Producer Microtech
Price **£2.20**

This is another game in the 'here's another *Quill*ed game in a cheap cover and if you're good we might tell you how much it costs — go on then, guess' category. However, in this case the authors have got an excuse — they are unquestionably mad and make no attempt to cover up what's blatantly obvious from the outset. To put it succinctly the guys at **MICROTECH** have lost their marbles. It is not like the other humorous games reviewed this month; there are no subtle lampoons here more a blunt bludgeoning of the senses with an inexorable onslaught of loonyisms.

The madness begins with the cover which is made the wrong way leaving you struggling to open the cassette box from the right when it is to the left. The loading screen shows a mock pound note where 'I promise to give the bearer on demand the sum of one's sanity' quite rightly has you wondering on what you've let yourself in for. So how does this adventure describe itself? 'Sensible, down to earth, original, unexaggerated, truthful, unerring, undeviating, precise, undistorted, honest, unbiased, fastidious, never wrong, always right, rational, well grounded adventure'. Oh, I see, a thesaurus style listing which can only be said to be in direct contradiction to the evidence, as having played some of this game, I can safely say it is the most insensible, pie in the sky, unoriginal, exaggerated, untruthful etc etc game I have ever played.

Following a very chirpy rendition of The Entertainer (stopped by pressing the BREAK key) the adventure immediately confronts you with its first absurdity, an irreverently long list of things you can see. Just check out this loony list. 'You are in the closet. You can also see: a silver candlestick (highlighted), an electrical plug, a blue coathanger, a two handed battlesword, an elephant's vest complete with holes, a tattered old scroll, a stained map, a screwdriver, a 13 amp fuse, some 7/8 spring-loaded washers, a bag of sparks, a bubble from a spirit level, a long stand, a set of 'Go Slower' stripes, a puncture repair outfit'. Now you won't be too amused to find that **QUILLED** games do not support the GET ALL command but not to worry, the game plays a little tune after picking up only four items — and that's your whack.

There is one drawback to trying to review *Crimble* and that is the danger of exposing you to the sort of crazy writing which is powerful enough to turn even a speed reader into a gibbering moron. Directions are never as stated so an exit from a location with NE, E, and S exits will as often as not be something like UP! What is more, dropping objects is sometimes the only way of picking them up and there are a number of 'Wrong Commands' especially formulated to keep you amused on your trip to insanity. The text itself isn't exactly on the straight and narrow. Take two of the milder examples (in the hope of leaving you sane for the rest of the column): 'Sat in amongst the Sour Williams you gaze at a garden gnome who is fishing in someone's Perno and Black. The smell of the freshly uncut grass is a somewhat pleasant sight'. And . . . 'Here you aren't in the outer garden shed where plant pots sing quietly to themselves whilst eating apples that smell a funny colour . . . You can also see a HW Smiths C15 tape with a PIRATE copy of *Jetpac*'. There are a few contemporary and political references in the mayhem but don't look to hard for any slant or pronounced bias, the message, if any, is lost in the twists and turns of the satire, anti-satire loony-go-round.

There are a few graphics scattered about in this adventure but they are more symbolic than accurate. However, this adventure does present a colourful face to the world and in any case the game is out for only one notoriety, to be the most crazed, mixed up adventure on the market and for my money it gets the prize.

Crimble is now available from **MICROTECH** at 88 Whitley Spring Crescent, Ossett, West Yorks.



Snails with TV aerials are just one of the strange beasties encountered in GRIMBLE, a very strange adventure indeed.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: leaves you feeling like you've been trepanned
Graphics: abstract but passable
Presentation: fair, colourful
Input facility: verb/noun
General rating: should sell like hot cakes in loony bins (Crash Towers?)

Atmosphere	70
Vocabulary	54
Logic	90
Addictive quality	73
Overall	**59**

SIGN STUMPS

Another massive postbag for SIGNSTUMPS this month, with the most popular games for queries being THE BOGGIT, KENTILLA ***and*** SEABASE DELTA.

Starting with SEABASE DELTA, **John Blakeley** ***from*** **Leeds** ***asks:***

How do I wake the hen?
How do I mend the conveyor belt on the second floor?
I have found a deep lift shaft and dropped the washing line, but what do I do next?

To wake the hen, CMPX CVCCMF with TPGU HVFZ HVN. To start the conveyor belt you will need the GPSL, then TIPSU TXJUDI. I don't think you can climb down the lift shaft but you can get the disc by fixing the magnet to the line.

Willy Byers ***of*** **Sunderland** ***asks:***

Please could you give me some help in zzzz (hope I spelled this right!). How do I get the bike without waking the guard as it is too heavy to carry.

Try XIFFM CJLF.

Jon Clarke ***from*** **Dudley** ***writes:***

In MOUNTAINS OF KET, ***how do I get past the wall in mint condition or enter the skull when in the cave under the mountains?***

You must carry the XBOE and TBZ QPMP.

The large number of queries on THE BOGGIT ***were mainly about one problem and typified by*** **Michael Hodkin** ***of*** **Nottingham** ***who writes:***

I recently bought the excellent follow up to BORED OF THE RINGS, THE BOGGIT. After many hours of play I still couldn't get out of the round tunnel at the start of the game. I would be very grateful if you could relieve my frustration.

Try DMJNC DIFTU then SFBE EJBSZ. You now have the combination. Simply TBZ the relevant number.

A couple of queries on the rather old VELNOR'S LAIR. **Murray Furtads** ***from*** **London** ***asks:***

How do you clear the rocks and what do you feed the sharks on?

While an adventurer from Upper Hale, Surrey (scared of being identified eh!) asks:

How do I get across the river? What does it say on the adjacent wall? On the plank it says EXTENDERE, what does this mean?

To move the rocks simply NPWF SPDLT; you will need a high strength to be able to achieve this however. To cross the river you need the CBUIUVC and PBST but first you will need to feed the crocs. They will eat any meat including you! I'd say a freshly killed Orc or Ogre would be best. To see the writing on the wall through the crack you will need the telescope. Incidentally, this word is randomly generated at the start of each game, anyone had a swearword yet? Oh, the final question, simply enter EXTENDERE and see what happens.

Steven Smith ***of*** **Oldham** ***is having difficulty with numerous adventures and asks:***

Please can you help me, I've been stumped on loads of games lately, could you help?

KENTILLA — I have reached the large stone door but can't find the corked bottle needed to get past it.

MORDON'S QUEST — What is the procedure for making a blowpipe?

WARLORD — I've worn the torc but I still can't get past the armed warrior.

MINDSHADOW — How do I get across the quicksand?

RED MOON — How do I kill the platinum dragons and what do I do with the Moon Crystal?

You will find the bottle by FYBNJOF EFCSJT. In MORDON'S QUEST, ***to make a blowpipe you will need the CFSSJFT, UIPSOT and CBNCPP then NBLF CMPXQJQF. In*** WARLORD ***it is MVH'T IFMNFU that you need to pass the warrior, not the torc. The quicksand in*** MINDSHADOW ***is passed by following the map found in the cave. Finally in*** RED MOON, ***to defeat the dragons XBWF GBO. As for the Moon Crystal, why not take it home?***

Simon Davis ***from*** **Hemel Hempstead** ***is one of many adventurers trapped in Tylon's castle in*** KENTILLA.

As a hint, examine the gargoyle statue in the cloyster garden. If you're still stuck PVMM BSN.

Val Dowie ***from*** **Redcar** ***is having difficulty on the same game and writes:***

If the Rattling Quarg can save me from the dreaded tentacles how do I get the Quarg across the river Cara? Elva won't oblige and I've waited and waited and waited for him to cross by himself.

You will need the rope from the Cavezats cavern. Simply UISPX SPQF.

Ian Dixon ***from*** **Wallasey, Merseyside** ***writes to say that the crate in*** SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE ***can be opened by throwing it whilst in the loft above the ballroom. When it is opened you can GO CRATE then GO HOLE and you're inside the crate. Many adventurers have been having difficulty drying the towel or getting the star from the fountain in this game. To dry the towel squeeze it twice over the lava. To get the star from the fountain, and live, you will need the dry towel. ENTER FOUNTAIN, GET STAR, FOUFS DFOUSF, ESZ NF.***

ENCRYPTION CORNER

It's easy to speak Brewster!

ENGLISH:	ZABCDEFGHIJKL
BREWSTER:	ABCDEFGHIJKLM
ENGLISH:	MNOPQRSTUVWXY
BREWSTER:	NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

That's all there is time for until next month. Any questions you have as well as any help you can offer to:

SIGNSTUMPS
PO BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE
SY8 1DB

SUPERHEROES

The games Mindstone and *The Boggit* have attracted quite a heated competition for the coveted award of ***Superhero***.

The *Mindstone* superhero just pipped **Oliver Collins** of London (August 1) and **Mark Thilby** of Leicester (August 2) to the title. He is none other than **P Goodman** of Lancaster who successfully tied things up on the 31st of July at 1.20pm. The end message is 'Well Done! You have guided Kyles team to the Mindstone. Now the world will be free from the evil Nemesar'.

The Boggit superhero is **John Wilson** of Rochdale, Lancs who turned out to be just that much more experienced than the runner up — **Ian Harrison** of Llandudno (another column regular) who finished the spoof on the 26th of July. John's record performance was complete by July 21, at 8.36pm. The final screen is:- 'Well done! Hooray! Woop! Woop! You have completed *The Boggit*, you hear? You! See you in *Sceptical 2*. For your attempts you are worth 104 Lenslock devices. You have entered 664 profound utterances. And so, amid assorted whoops, cheers, rasps, gongs and whistles the sun set on another improbable chapter in Muddle Earth's sordid history . . . Are you going to try again or can we go home now?'

It is indeed time to go home, see you next month.



CHEAP TRICK

Dear Derek,
In February this year I sent a copy of my Spectrum *Quill*ed adventure, *Star Trek*, to a firm specialising in very cheap adventures. However, since then I have been unable to get any sort of reply from them. I find it disgusting that I have waited over four months for a reply. Could you please use your journalistic muscle to get anything out of them. I have written several letters but have had no luck.

The first thing to note is that software houses are inundated with games to evaluate. The rules of the business have it, that for the chance of having their programs professionally marketed the programmers must submit a cassette and be prepared never to have it returned, and indeed, never to hear of the program again. Because of the restrictions on time and effort amongst software houses it is in the programmer's best interests to ensure a good backup copy is retained and that a telephone number is included in any communication. It is my experience that unless a software house phones within a few days of you sending off your program you can safely assume they are not too interested in your product. It is also my experience that professionalism amongst software houses varies tremendously yet comes down to one simple factor — whether the guy at the sharp end (evaluator/phonesharp) really cares about what the company's image is. Invariably these chaps either live in London or skipped college, or both. What more can I say!
DB

MORE DEADLY SINS

Dear Derek,
With reference to your Deadly Sins column last month I have found another two (gosh!).
Your Hands Are Too Full.
All too often now, adventure writers are resorting to stopping you from carrying the necessary equipment to solve a problem, rather than making the problem more difficult. The usual allotment of four items is not enough; by the time you've carried a source of light and a weapon it leaves you little room to experiment. Much better is the system in *The Hobbit* where you can carry as much junk around as you like.
Time . . . (snore) . . .
Another thing which defeats the entertainment objective is when a program is so complex or has detailed graphics to the extent where it slows down the response time. This is infuriating, especially if you are killed and have to start all over again. One example of this is *Lord of the Rings*. I bought it and took it back three times ('cos it wouldn't load; well we all know about THAT now — our WH Smith manager nearly had a nervous breakdown because he thought the whole lot were faulty)! Anyway, I've only played it twice because I haven't the patience. More time is spent waiting than adventuring.
J Hilton, Merseyside

FLOWING QUILL

Dear Derek,
Having got over the initial shock of seeing my letter printed in SIGNPOST (issue 31) I saw the *Quill* routine to print out text. I thought you might be interested in the following *Quill* routines.
To save a finished adventure onto Microdrive:
1) Find the length of the saved adventure by subtracting 25000 from the second number given after selecting 0 from the menu.
2) Save the adventure onto tape.
3) Return to BASIC. Type in the following and save it to cartridge:

```
10 REM drive loader
20 CLEAR 24999
30 LET d = PEEK 23766
40 LOAD * "m"; d; "filename" CODE
50 RANDOMIZE USR 25000 (25063 for serial C)
```

4) CLEAR 24999. LOAD "" CODE on the saved adventure from step 2
5) SAVE * "m"; 1 ; "filename" CODE 25000,(length from step 1)
If *The Illustrator* is used, then follow steps 2 and 3 using 25063 in the USR call.
Then: CLEAR 24999 : LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE on the saved adventure from step 2. SAVE * "m"; 1 ; "filename" CODE 25000,40535.
The game should now load



from any Microdrive. Note, I don't know if this will work with *The Patch*, but I doubt it.

To add a new character set (providing a new character set of 768 bytes to define characters 32 to 127 called "7chset" has been saved to tape). The best place to put the new set is after the *Quill* database which allows it to be saved with *The Illustrator*.

1) Make sure the database is the final version. Note the address of the first free byte given by the option 0 from the menu. We will call it ***, so substitute the value at each occurrence.
2) save adventure, not database.
3) Return to BASIC, type in the following program and save it to tape:

```
10 REM character set
20 CLEAR 24999
30 LOAD "name" CODE
25000
40 POKE 23606, *** — 256 *
INT (***/256)
50 POKE 23607, INT (***/
256)-1
60 RANDOMIZE USR 25000
(25063 for serial C)
```

4) 3CLEAR 24999. LOAD "" CODE on the saved adventure from step 2
5) LOAD "chset" CODE ***
6) Save the entire block of code with:
SAVE "name" CODE 25000,(*** + 768) — 25000 onto the cassette after the loader in 3.

If *The Illustrator* is used the above method will still work as long as you leave 800 bytes spare in the graphics database. (You can only calculate *** with a series C *Quill*. The result given by a series A is meaningless after conversion). Ignore step 4 onwards and use the following:-
4) CLEAR 24999. LOAD "" CODE: LOAD "" CODE on the saved adventure from step 2.
5) LOAD "chset" CODE ***
6) SAVE the entire block after the loader from step 3 with the line: SAVE "name" CODE 25000,40535

David Bovill, Gwynedd

I'VE BEEN GAC'd!

Dear Mr Brewster,
Having been a keen adventurer for three years now, I was glad to see that INCENTIVE had the brains to release *The Graphic Adventure Creator* on the Spectrum. When I saw an offer for *GAC* I sent away for it straight away. When it arrived a few days later I eagerly loaded it.

At first I was amazed at the sophistication of it but gradually, as I got used to it, I found a few faults with it.
a) There isn't a WEAR command as such. You have to mix commands and use SWAP. This just makes life a lot harder and uses a lot of time and memory.
b) If, while you are typing in your adventure, you accidentally press X on the main menu, *GAC* prints 'It will destroy all your data, sure?'. If you press N then the main menu is printed. This is good. But if you press Y or any other key then it takes it as YES and all your data is destroyed.

What should happen in my view is it should take any key apart from Y, as NO, to stop your data being erased accidentally. Because of this silly bug I lost all the data from my adventure by accident, and at half past two in the morning that's no joke!
c) There isn't a GET ALL or DROP ALL command.

After all that, there are a lot of excellent features:
a) Multi Sentence Input. This is the only adventure creator I know of that has this excellent facility. For example, you can type N,S,W, TAKE RING, EXAMINE IT, WEAR IT.
b) Being able to use the word IT is also a useful feature as it cuts down on the amount of typing needed and thus lets you get on with adventuring.
c) The response time is almost as good as the *Quill*, and this is hardly noticable.

All in all, it is the best adventure utility for the Spectrum and the price is very reasonable.

Richard Hawkins, Surrey

TOLKIEN TAMED

Dear Derek,
I would like to reply to David Bovill's letter (August issue) who criticised both MELBOURNE HOUSE'S excellent games, *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*.

He says that both games do not come close to the book and there is no atmosphere. This is totally wrong. The descriptions in both games are superb, therefore the atmosphere created is second to none.

The small bugs in the game are excusable as it is obviously very hard to create a database like that used in *The Hobbit* and *LOR* and Philip Mitchell deserves credit for doing such a great job. If it was not possible to make other decisions or 'tread paths that the characters in Tolkien's novels never walked you could simply read the book and save yourself a lot of trouble' as the instructions make very clear, but obviously Mr Bovill thought it would be a walkover as he had read the books and so didn't bother to read the instructions. He also criticises the graphics. These have to be some of the best ever used in adventures, but then he could do better I suppose?

James Baldock, Cambs

TAKING THE MYSTERY FROM MAGICK

Dear Derek,
After totally destroying *Lords of Midnight* with my short pokes program (Robin Candy published it last October) I turn my talented sword onto other adventures. The program below gives you starting values of 99 for Skill, Stamina, and Luck, and infinite Stamina. Note, during turboload operation the border is masked black.

```
1 REM Heavy on the Magick
2 REM Border masked black
3 REM during turboload
5 PRINT AT 9,0 ; "START
HEAVY ON THE MAGICK
TAPE"
10 LOAD "" CODE
20 READ a : IF a > 255 THEN
LET b = a : GOTO 20
30 IF a <> 1 THEN POKE b,a :
LET b = b + 1 : GOTO 20
40 DATA 47225, 33, 54, 153,
34
41 DATA 149, 169, 34, 159,
169
42 DATA 34, 171, 169, 50, 117
43 DATA 129, 50, 182, 129, 24
44 DATA 156, 221, 124, 254
45 DATA 184, 32, 155, 23693,
0
50 DATA 47143, 24, 10, 50,
148
51 DATA 170, 24, 173, 221,
117
52 DATA 0, 24, 96, 47279, 221
60 DATA 47288, 121, 184
65 DATA 47016, 225, 47164,
0
70 DATA 47013, 31, 47316, 0,
1
80 BORDER 0, CLS
90 RANDOMIZE USR 47000
```

Paul Stephenson, Leeds

This month's £20 software prize goes to David Bovill for his Quill routines.

DB



GENESIS

THE BIRTH OF A GAME



THE SERIOUS WORK BEGINS . . .

The judging's over, the euphoria of winning has subsided and the harsh realities of a commercial schedule begin to bite home. The first GENESIS game design has to be turned into a program by mid-October to be a commercially viable release for Christmas. At the end of August GRAEME KIDD sat in on the first meeting between game designer and game programmer. . . by the time you read this report, the programming will be almost complete!

JONATHAN EGGELTON, designer of *KAT TRAP — Planet of the Cat Men* harboured a guilty secret down in his hometown. Being collected from Milton Keynes by DESIGN DESIGN programmer GRAHAM STAFFORD and driven at high speeds to Birmingham for a meeting is enough to soften anyone up: during the journey, Jonathan came clean . . .

Although he was joint winner of the GENESIS Birth of a Game competition, and despite the fact that his game design was selected by the judges as the first one to be programmed, Jonathan didn't actually own a Spectrum! Nor was Jon a regular CRASH reader!!

Of course, this undesirable state of affairs was quickly remedied — a phone call to DESIGN DESIGN headquarters had a Spectrum winging its way down south almost immediately, and Mr Eggelton has promised to start reading CRASH every month from now on.

So, how did a non-CRASH reading person get wind of the competition in the first place? Jonathan explained that he wasn't a totally sinful fellow — as a Commodore 64 owner he reads ZZAP! every month, and generally gets a good look at the latest CRASH at school, where people tend to read the magazine in groups. "*A little while ago I spotted a competition in ZZAP! where the idea was to design a game, but I never got around to entering it. Then I saw the GENESIS competition in CRASH, and although I realised it was going to be rather more difficult, seeing as I didn't own a Spectrum, I thought I'd have a go and try to take into account the Spectrum's capabilities.*"

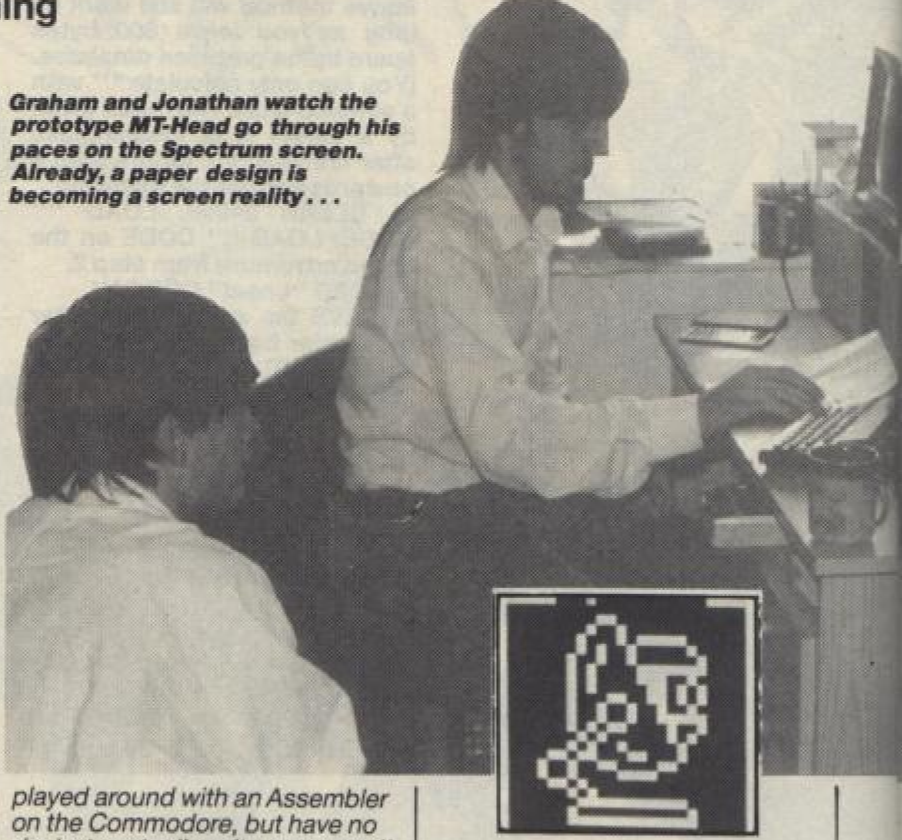
After a few hours spent thinking up basic ideas, Jonathan drew some sketches of the central character, MT-Head. And perhaps not owning a Spectrum helped Jon get into the appropriate frame of mind for designing a game which could actually be written on the machine — according to Graham, there were an awful lot of entries that would have required an interface from the Spectrum to a Cray 1 to implement . . .

Basically, *KAT TRAP* features a cute robotic hero on a quest to save his droid chum who has been kidnapped by the evil Cat People. He has to fight his way through umpteen hostile zones, free his chum, and get home safely . . . The basic designs for the characters in the game were roughed out first: "*The hardest bit was coming up with the enemies — you need a lot of variety in order to stop things getting repetitive*", Jon explained. "*In the final design, I had fourteen different backgrounds, and they were all made up as I went along.*"

Jonathan's mind was concentrated on his task, partly as a result of the fact that he didn't have the copy of CRASH in which he'd first spotted the competition — it belonged to a friend of his, **Ian West**. (*There's your namecheck, Ian—***ED**)" *Unfortunately, I had read the closing date wrong, and was working to a date one month before the actual deadline. When I found out, I thought 'What a Wally!'*"

The judges were impressed by the presentation of Jonathan's entry as well as by the content of the actual game design he submitted — it included a table that detailed the attributes of the nasties in the game, setting out which creatures could be killed and how. From a programming point of view, Graham Stafford was well impressed with the level of detail contained in the design. The artwork was eye-catching too . . .

"*I'd really like to be an artist or designer*", Jon explained, "*I've always been interested in art — I just picked it up and have got better with practice. I'm not bothered about programming much — I've played around with an Assembler on the Commodore, but have no desire to actually write programs.*"



Graham and Jonathan watch the prototype MT-Head go through his paces on the Spectrum screen. Already, a paper design is becoming a screen reality . . .

During the drive up to Birmingham, Graham had explained what was involved in preparing graphics for a game and Jonathan had already agreed to get involved in designing scenery and animation frames. Graham explained: "*Jon's role to me is to do with the presentation of the finished game. He's not going to tell me how to write the game, but conversely, I'm not going to tell him how the game should look. He's got clear ideas on how the graphics should work, and it makes my life easier if someone is working on the graphics*



while I write the code.

''*I'm giving Jonathan a copy of the graphics utility we use: he's going to go away and play around with it for a couple of weeks. I need three or four times as many graphics producing as will end up in the game — there's no way you're going to get them all right.*

''*For scenery graphics, the idea is to do lots, and then we can sit down together and pick the best. Animations need to be refined as you go along really . . .*''

In terms of actual programming, Graham had spent about four days working solidly on *KATTRAP* by the time of the meeting — it might not sound like much could be achieved in such a short time, but a fair bit of programmer-type thinking had been going on inside the Stafford mind before Graham actually set to.

Obviously, games programmers build up a library of routines, and Graham had bolted together a framework, the scaffolding of the game, which borrowed from existing code. Having decided that smooth horizontal scrolling was not appropriate he had plumped for a flip screen approach to the game. Taking into account the fact that *KATTRAP* is played through zones, or areas which share a common background, he opted for a horizontal arrangement of attributes with masked sprites moving in the foreground.

Once these basic decisions had been taken, Graham was able to bolt together a set of subroutines, rough out some simple background graphics and develop a pilot animation sequence for the central character, MT-Head. By the time the first project meeting was due, there was something to see, and both Jonathan and I were impressed! The prototype MT-Head sproinged around the screen in a very convincing manner.

While we watched MT-Head do his stuff, Graham explained how the 48K of memory available to him would probably be used up.

''*About 7K is used for the screen and you need around 1K as scratchpad memory — the stack and other bits and bobs fit in there. Then the map uses around 5K, 1K is needed for the character set and about 20K for the graphics. That leaves about 14 or 15K for the actual program, and in terms of the space taken up by actual bytes of instructions used by the Z80, around 12K is used.*

''*So in a 48K machine, only about a quarter of the available memory is actually used by the program that runs the game. All the rest is data. Graphics eat up memory, and duplication has to be avoided wherever possible. For instance, the graphics for MT-Head facing left will be the same as the the graphics for him facing right — I'll use a reversal routine to turn him round rather than have two different sets of graphics stored away. There will still be some eighteen frames of animation and the animations will probably occupy about 2K — which is a sixth of the size of the core program that runs everything!*''

When it comes to writing the code for *KATTRAP*, Graham is using a Gemini multiboard system under CP/M running *Wordstar* and *Macro 80*. Working this way, the program can be split down into small segments, and little bits can be assembled with *Macro 80* and then put together — effectively, Graham has a source file for each subroutine or area of the final program. There will be just the one file for MT-Head himself, for instance, and a host of routines will interact with the contents of that file.

The main program, which actually runs everything, is only a few lines long in Assembler — this main source file is about 1300 characters long on the Gemini. Half the number of bytes that will be in the final Spectrum program had already been collected together in time for the meeting — ''*the framework is there already*'', Graham explained, ''*the next stage is to put in the mechanics of the game. By early October we should start to have a playable version and it ought to be very nearly complete by October 15th — that's our target. Then, we have a couple of weeks available for tidying up, before the production version has to be ready.*''

Obviously, this is a highly structured approach to writing a program. What makes a good programmer? ''*As far as I'm concerned a good programmer isn't someone who can write fast code — it helps — but a good programmer is one who knows how to do something. The most important thing is to think things through properly so you don't do things you don't have to do. The whole task has to be seen in a global sense.*''

Graham and Jonathan huddled together over the Spectrum screen as the workings of the **DESIGN DESIGN** custom graphics utility were demonstrated. Then, with the first project meeting over, it was time for us to go out separate ways. At last, being a winner of the GENESIS Birth of a Game competition had sunk in, and clutching a cassette containing the art utility, Jonathan steeled himself for the drive home. ''*I had a phone call saying I had won something in the competition the day before I was going on holiday,*'' he remembered, ''*I couldn't believe I had won the top prize — I hadn't got the copy of CRASH which gave details of the prizes, so I was up all night wondering what the other prizes were and what I had won, and then I phoned Ian in the morning and got him to look it up. I couldn't believe I was going to collect at least £1,000.*''

Twenty two frames of animation for MT-Head featured in the original game design. In the finished version of the game, there will probably be eighteen frames of animation — if you think about it, savings can be made. For instance, the sequences for ducking and jumping can use the same frames, in a different order and in a different relative position on the screen. . . .

DESIGN A LEISURE COMPLEX FOR THE YEAR 2050 AND WIN THE DEFINITIVE SQUASH OUTFIT PLUS...

Crash Competition

50 Copies of ROOM TEN for the lucky runners up!



Those ever-so-modest people at CRL were rightly proud of their brilliant game *Tau Ceti* and asked Pete Cooke to write yet more games all tying in with the *Tau Ceti* mythos. So he's working on a Spectrum version of *Room Ten* which, as any Galaxy-hopping man-about-the-cosmos will tell you, is the room in the Galcorps leisure complex that is reserved for the very popular sport of low gravity Glyding which is similar in many respects to playing low gravity squash.

In this respect, *Room Ten* is a futuristic sports simulation where you play against either a human or an unforgiving computer without having to moon-jump around yourself like some futuristic Jonah Barrington.

Of course, at CRASH Towers the leisure industry has a few unwilling converts. Yes, if you're talking fitness then half an hour in the CRASH office should make you think seriously about high fibre diets and four evenings a week at a sports centre.

Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith has been making an effort to trim away those extra inches and build up her stamina for another gruelling day at the CRASH Towers. She's bought a Girlie exercise tape and late at night the sounds of pulsating music can be heard wafting over Ludlow as she jumps around getting very hot and sweaty doing aerobics and other strange gyrations. In the mornings she can often be seen limping through Ludlow as the results of the night before make themselves apparent.

Garth Sumpter, chief Database Minion, is also jumping on the Get Fit bandwaggon. Having not seen his feet for the last few weeks he decided to do something about his Guinness paunch, and took up jogging. However, a nasty side effect of this is that his stomach keeps flying up and smacking him in the nose and he coughs for next three days. Methinks he should stick to the odd sprint when it's his turn to buy a round in the pub . . .

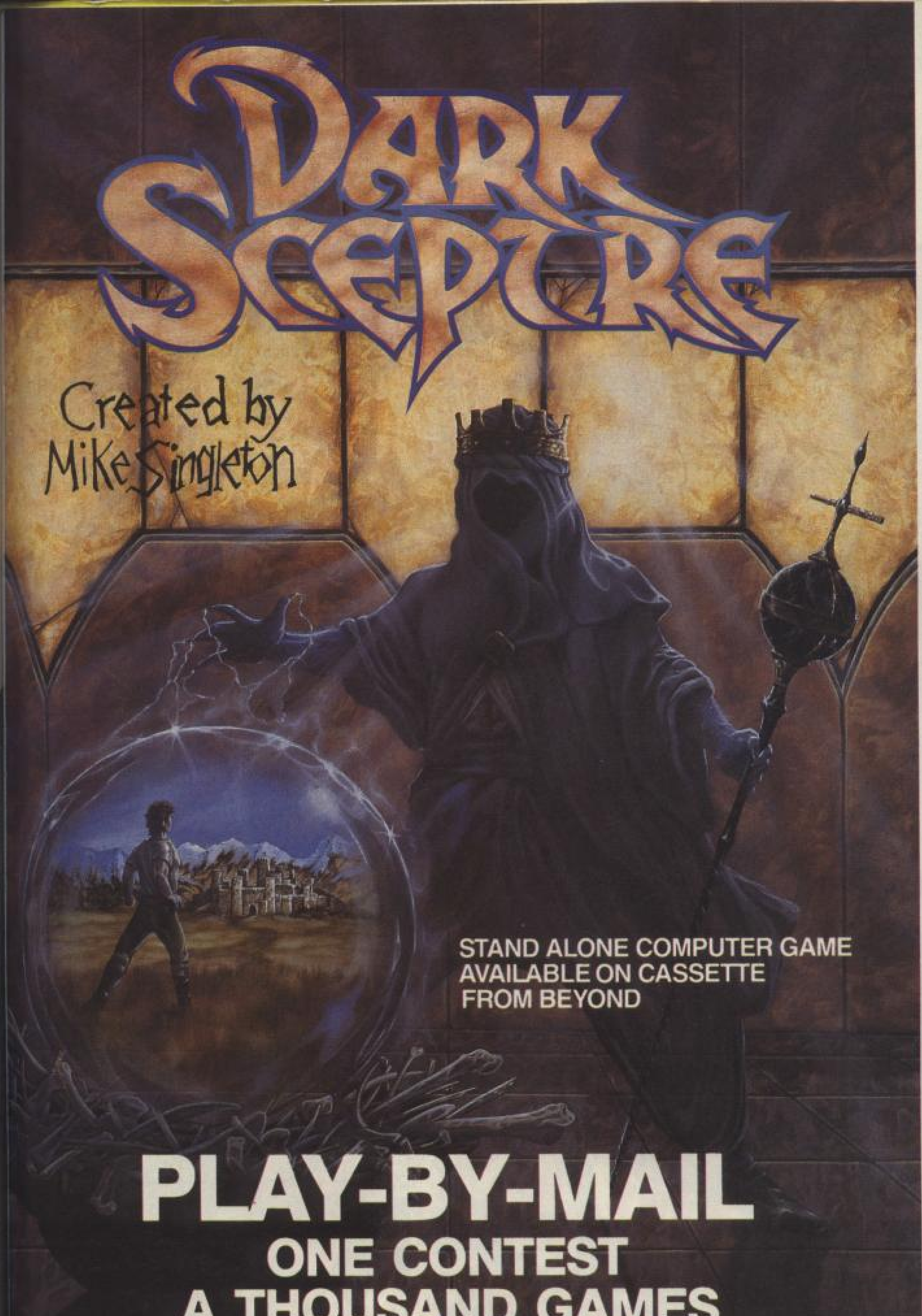
The closest that Graeme (he of the Doc Martens) Kidd gets to exercise is a sort of aerobic drinking. Every day after work he takes a leisurely stroll for a spot of gentle weight lifting with a pint of Old Flatulence in one hand and a large sausage sandwich in the other. This form of exercise usually continues for four hours or so when, exhausted by his exertions, he is carried home and tucked up in his snug, warm bed.

All this talk of fitness and leisure must be leading somewhere . . . *Room Ten's* producers CRL, like the idea of Galcorps corporation giving fitness and sport such a high profile within their organisation and the loverrly Leslie at CRL knows the benefits of exercise because she's very fit herself!

She's offering the definitive squash outfit comprising shirt, shorts, shoes, socks, racquet and warmed squash balls to the lucky person who designs a leisure complex for the year 2050. Not only will the lucky winner be asked by Leslie for personal details like chest, waist and shoe size but she'll also arrange a couple of free squash lessons to get you started on the path to fitness — as well as a copy of the game if you feel like taking it easy for a while.

Not everyone will be able to become the pride of the squash courts, however, so forty runners up will each receive a copy of *Room Ten* so they can Glyde effortlessly from the safety of their own living room.

Commit your designs for the leisure complex of the future to a piece of paper no bigger than A4 (that's 210mm x 300mm) and send it to: **CRASH, ROOM 10, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than 23rd October.



You are playing in a vast contest. All over the country hundreds of others strive like you to seize the Dark Sceptre. On microdrive cartridge you send us your commands and we return to you the latest news of your warriors — one episode in your struggle to power.

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The whole package is £14.95 and each extra episode you play costs just £1.50 (1st class postage included).

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To play DARK SCEPTRE by mail, just fill in this coupon and post it to Maelstrom Games Ltd., 42 Wellington Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, L45 2NG. Please make cheque payable to Maelstrom Games Ltd.

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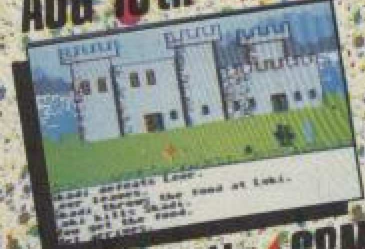
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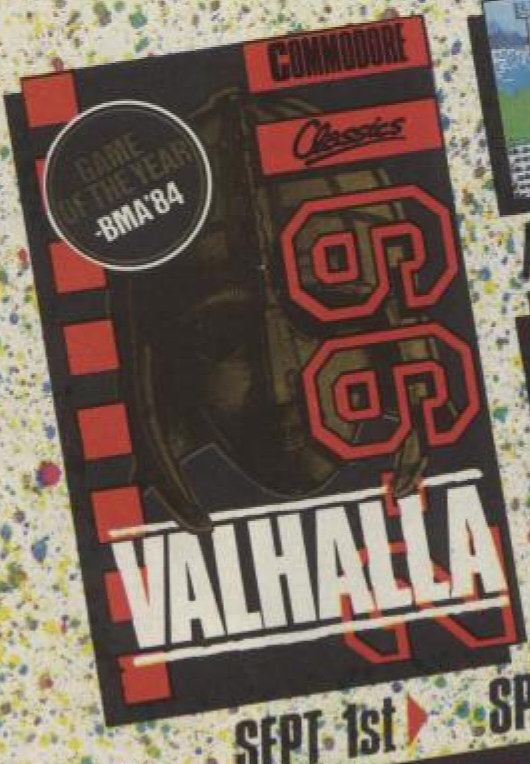
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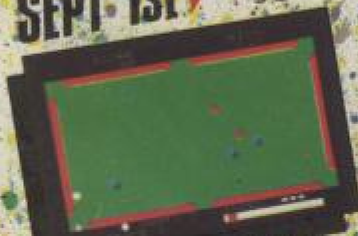




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FIREBIRD

Crash Competition

TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE AND YOU COULD WIN A PERSONALISED COPY OF DRUID!



20 Firebird T Shirts also up for grabs!

FIREBIRD's latest release due out for the Spectrum everso soon is *Druid*. The game puts you in the role of Mr Druid, out to defeat the Evil Princess of Darkness. The nasty ol' princess has unleashed her wrath in the shape of four skulls (wouldn't you just know it?) which have infested the lower vaults of a huge eight storey tower. Mr D, along with his faithful (but not so clever) companion Mr Golem, has to fight zillions of meanies and cast spells left, right and centre in order to transform the world into a happy and peaceful place. Sounds great, eh? Yes it does.

Anyway, some kind 'n' clever chappy at **FIREBIRD** had a really neat idea. What he wants you oh-so-cool-and-artistic people to do is design a final congratulatory screen for *Druid*. The bestest entry will be programmed into a special one-off production copy by the authors of the game. Gosh! Just imagine: if you win, you could own a personalised copy of a best selling game! Impress your friends! (Nyah! Nyah! Look what I've got). Amaze and astound your relatives! (Look Auntie, look what **I** did).

Tell you what, just to give you a few ideas what the screen could look like, here are a few things that the *Druid* will have to encounter and overcome to complete the game . . .

The creatures include ghosties (eek!), skeletons (ooh!), big 'n' nasty beetles (ah!), skulls (aargh!), witches (shriek!) and all sorts of traditional scary thingies (sounds like a normal day at CRASH Towers). When a druid arrives at this final screen he will have risen through the ranks to become a legendary Light Master. So, get your art kits out, scribble a screen and whisk your emblazoned pieces of paper off to: **DESIGNER DRUIDS, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

Entries must arrive no later than the 23rd of October. Best scribbler wins their very own copy of the unique game. The next best 20 masterpieces each win their creators a **FIREBIRD** T-Shirt to love and to hug, so don't forget to include your T-Shirt size. Well then, what are you waiting for — get to it!



VORTEX — A WH OF 3D GAMES ..

COSTA PANAYI is a name you tend to remember, and in Spectrum circles it is a name firmly associated with 3D games. Games such as *TLL*, *Cyclone*, *Android II*, *Highway Encounter* and of course, this month's Smash — *Revolution*.

Costa is the main man when it comes to programming at VORTEX, the Manchester-based software house, while LUKE ANDREWS takes care of the business affairs. Costa and Luke came to Ludlow with one of the first copies of *Revolution* for us to review, and while they were here Graeme Kidd seized the opportunity to talk to the duo with a persistent reputation for producing quality games.

Like quite a few software houses, **VORTEX** began life as a hobby. Costa Panayi first got interested in computing back in the ZX81 days at the end of 1982. He was working as a mechanical engineer and bought one of Sir Clive's home computers, played around with it and swapped programs with ZX81 owning friends. Then he got together with a few friends, they decided they could write programs and gradually the hobby started to pay for itself: "*Our first games were* Pontoon *and* Othello *— small BASIC games — and we sent them off to a publishers and started earning royalties! Once we'd written and sold those games we bought books on machine code and started learning. Then the Spectrum came out and we wrote* Cosmos *and* Android I.

"*Soon, we realised that writing programs was okay as a hobby, but when we tried to run a business on the side it was taking up too much time. We knew Luke, who was a teacher at the time, and he was interested in the business side of things . . . .*

Luke takes over the story: "*I got involved on the business side to allow the lads to program — everything was still being done on a part-time or hobby basis and with the talents that everyone had, everyone fitted in quite nicely so we just progressed. Everyone who's been associated with us has really helped and encouraged us — people have seen that we've worked hard and that we've got the product, and everyone's pushed and said 'well done' which is great. Sometimes, a lot of people just say 'oh don't bother' or whatever, which is a bit demoralising, but we never had to face that.*

Gradually, what was a fairly lucrative (and time consuming) hobby grew to the point where it was a backroom industry and then, during 1983, the team got together, decided on a plan and began to run **VORTEX** professionally. It was clear the company was successful enough to warrant people giving up their 'day jobs': "*Yes, we bought premises, employed people and so on. In some ways we're cautious on the business side, as we are on the programming side, in the sense that Cos has always come out with excellent stuff, and we are more geared to quality than quantity*", Luke explains. "*Naturally, we all had a few regrets when we first started out writing and selling programs full-time — if you've got a secure job and are doing well in it and it comes to the point where a part-time job suddenly has to at least equal what you were doing before, then decisions become a bit difficult. We got to the stage where we thought to ourselves that we'd succeeded so far and got to a certain level and we had to make a decision. We couldn't really turn back, though . . . The biggest worry was whether the computer craze would die out overnight. Quite clearly, that isn't going to be the case.*"

Costa Panayi's games have been the backbone of **VORTEX**'s success, although other releases like *Alien Highway* have involved other programmers heavily . . . Obviously, a company such as **VORTEX** gets sent quite a few programs for evaluation. Have they never been tempted to start a budget label, for instance? Luke explains: "*I suppose we could easily have started another label on the budget side, but it's not the sort of thing we want to do. How can you one day be sat down working out something really complicated and new, and two hours later try and promote a game that sells for £1.99? Your heart's not in it. Maybe some people*

The Casual Approach To Pillar Leaning as demonstrated by Mr Panayi on the left, and Mr Andrews on the right. Could set a whole new trend in Ludlow, this. . . .

WHIRL

■ ■ ■

can work that way, but I don't think we could . . ."

Working as a design engineer, Costa was involved in 3D geometry on a daily basis, so when it came to programming games it's not too surprising that 3D techniques came quite naturally to the fore. "*I'm quite fascinated with 3D — I've always liked to have things neatly arranged and geometrically correct, and I suppose my engineering background all tied in with programming.*"

Costa first took the plunge into 3D with *Android II* and since then all his games have been in 3D. "*It just seems like a step backwards to return to 2D now — I find you get a feeling of space when you're working in 3D, and I don't think I could write in 2D. It would be easy enough to do, but I wouldn't want to.*"

With a string of successful games behind him (the lowest overall rating Costa collected was 79%), he's invested a fair bit of time, effort and expertise into developing 3D techniques on the Spectrum. But it's not just a question of keeping routines and adding to them — *Highway Encounter* meant starting from scratch again, and *Revolution* is another fundamentally different style of display and programming. "*I like to take a completely different approach to the way I handle the 3D in each game,*", Costa explains, "*It would be nice to come up with some sort of new system which gets out of the mould. We did it with* Highway, *and then we decided that we had to come up with something different, totally away from the shoot em up type game. After* Revolution, *it would be nice to do something completely different again. It's as much a matter of looking at the game types and the way games play as actually looking at the environment — you can keep producing 3D games, the same games with a different scenario, but the difficulty is in coming up with something different.*"

Revolution was designed with lastability in mind, so far as the gameplay was concerned. Each time a new game starts, the puzzles are shifted around between levels and their locations on individual levels are also changed randomly. "*Shifting the puzzles round and creating a new landscape, or set of levels, each time you start to play — it's trying to make the game something more than other games on the market,*", Luke says, "*even with our old games, you always had the first level, second level, third level and so on, and you knew what was coming.* Alien Highway, *the remix of* Highway Encounter *started us thinking that way, and with* Revolution *I think the changes in the puzzles and landscape are the main attraction. If someone picks up the game and can't get past the first level, then the game can be played on level one and the player still gets thirty new puzzles — so you can still enjoy it, even if you never get past the first level!.*"

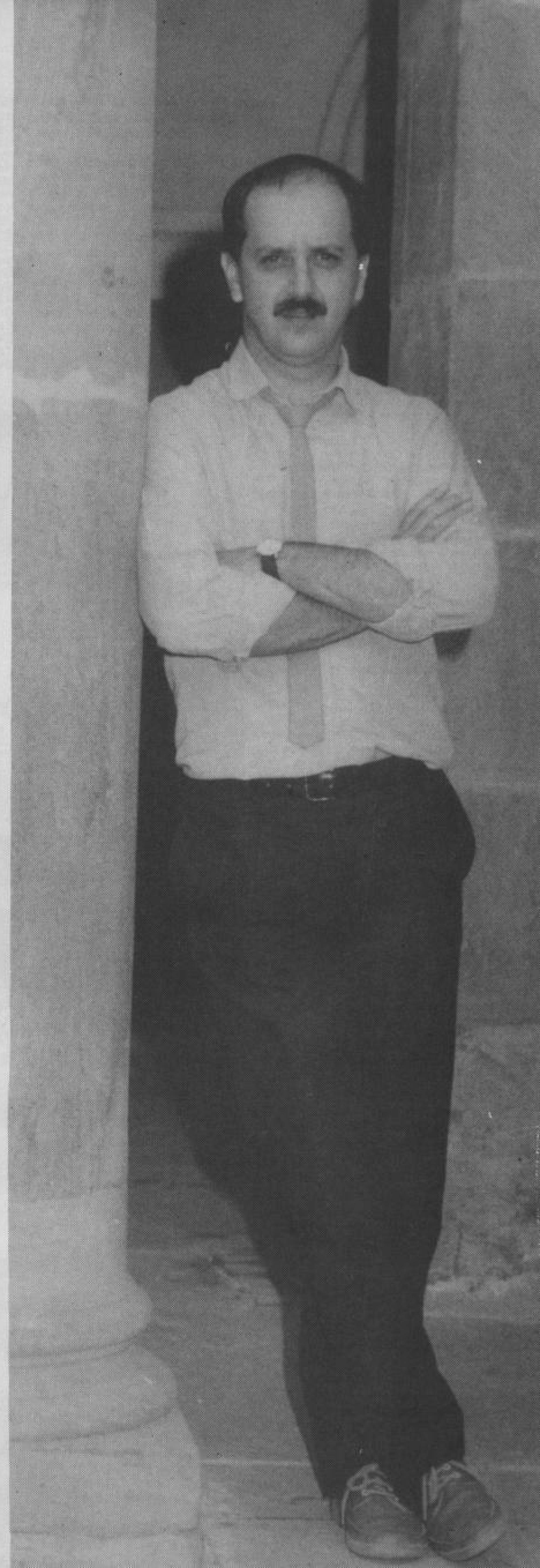
VORTEX appear every six months or so — two games a year is about all Costa can handle on his own. They take a different approach to designing games too: there's never a storyboard to work from: "*Well, I come out with ideas — as does everybody,*" Costa explains, "*and we throw them about and we always seem to reach a point where we say 'that's a good idea, why don't we go ahead and see what that brings forward?'. Ideas that we find in the meantime are thrown in as well.*"

"*It's a process of continual design rather than continual refinement,*" Luke adds, "*For instance we might decide to do something that has two animation stages in it, and Costa goes away and works for about two weeks on it and comes back with five stages of animation. We say to him 'I thought you said it could only be two stages' and he'll say 'yes, well it's different, there's five now!'*"

"*With* Revolution *we thought there are no bouncing ball games, so why don't we have a go? And suddenly all these ball games started appearing! They all tend to be rolling rather than bouncing, so there's a difference,*" Costa adds, "*The same thing happened with* Cyclone *— it seemed a natural progression from* TLL *and then there were dozens of helicopter games on the market suddenly . . .*"

Things are moving for **VORTEX**. They've just signed a deal with **US GOLD**, who will be taking care of the marketing side of things for them in future, and they plan to expand: "*Now that the market's moved on to Europe, and we've moved on,* **VORTEX** *has outgrown the* **VORTEX** *team and with this deal, some of the pressure is taken off us. We can really concentrate on producing the software, and the aim is to build a team around Cos to keep producing the same standard of games. We have our own standards, and intend to stick to them. We're looking for talented programmers up in Manchester, so if anyone would like to get in touch . . .*"

Obviously, with a six month lead time on a Costa Panayi game, there's unlikely to be another release in time for Christmas. But with the plans for taking on extra hands, who knows? Luke and Costa left for Manchester smiling enigmatically. They may have something in the pipeline for the festive season after all . . .



The winds of change have been blowing through Ludlow of late — not only has the Town Hall been demolished, but a Hypermarket (whatever one of those might be) is under construction within the town boundaries.

The Doc Martened One, as our illustrious Editor is called, has been muttering darkly about the cost of renting the Ludlow Gibbet. It may be that one or two changes are planned for the Hall of Slime — depending on how the *Match Day* Challenge goes. . . . Besides, our contract with the Ludlow Mafia is due for renewal soon.

Perhaps the level of cheats has risen a little high of late, and it may well be time to start weeding out the real high score merchants from more ordinary mortals with pretentions to joystick mastery.

Time alone will tell whether the winds of change will merely cause rhythmic creakings on the gibbet — so for the meantime keep sending me your high scores. And Cheats Beware. As wintery weather draws in, the Ludlow Gibbet becomes an increasingly unpleasant place to find yourself. . . .

Bombjack 794,570
Buggy Blast 17,506 Level 7, 87.53%
Cyber Rats 244,461
Dark Star Completed with 21 planets liberated, 11,920
Halls of the Things Completed, 1790, 183 things killed
Highway Encounter 81,080
Lords of Midnight Completed first time I played it!
Quazatron 53,915 points. Cities conquered; Quazatron, Beebaton, Commodo, Amstrados, Spectoron and got onto Atarilix.
Spectacle All pages read, sanity intact (I think)
Starquake Completed 298,610 — 79%
Starstrike II Completed, 2,391,300
Exploding Fist 835,600, beat 10th Dan 140 times
Sean Bayley aka Seanus the B, Shropshire

World Cup Carnival Won world cup
Rocco Completed
Match Day Won final 10-0
Rambo Completed 49,175
Minder £4,538
Ping Pong Beaten CPU on level 5
Back to Skool Completed
Match Point Beaten computer in quarter and semi finals
David Woods, Ipswich

Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Underwurlde Completed
Beach Head Completed all levels
Rocco World champion
Ghost Busters Completed
Full Throttle 3rd
Shadowfire Completed
TLL 3 Sectors completed
Highway Encounter Zone 2
Hypersports Completed 5 times
Saboteur Completed 3 Levels
River Raid Bridge 56
Shaun Somers, Sheffield

Dynamite Dan Completed
Finders Keepers Completed
Roller Coaster Reached fun house
Mr Zippo Jones, Manchester

Cyberun Completed
Bruce Lee Completed 9 times
Starstrike II 1,328,600
Paul Rutledge

Redhawk Completed
Ghosts and Goblins Completed
Jack The Nipper Completed
Action Reflex Completed
Stainless Steel Completed
V Completed
Bounder Completed
Batman Completed
Ping Pong Beat CPU on level 5
Hacker of Haxby

Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Mikie 120,520 Round twice
Pyjamarama Completed with 97%
3 Weeks in Paradise Completed
Starquake Completed
Elite Deadly 97,000 odd
Tapper Space bar
Knight Lore 99% completed
Kung Fu Black belt 7th dan
Ping Pong Completed on levels 1-5
Sabre Wulf 89% completed 126,550
Bombjack 361,750
Green Beret Completed (only a little POKE)
Bobby Bearing Rescued Barnaby and Bert also found Bungo
Graham Monkman, Deeside

Pentagram Completed
Fred 5th level 50,800
Stop the Express Stopped twice
Kosmic Kanga 9th screen
Jetpac 125,385 built 14 rockets
Ant Attack Nine women
Hypersports Swimming 25.6; Skeet 9600; Horse 9.99; Archery 4400; Triple jump 17.80; Weights Super heavy; Overall 390,549
Deathchase Bonus
Monty on the Run 6,890
Hobbit Completed
Velnor Completed
Kentilla Completed
Robin of Sherwood Completed in just over a week
Sean Murphy, Middlesex



Atic Attack Completed in 16 mins, 8 secs 100%
Tomahawk Completed mission 2 — No losses
Spy Vs Spy I spy harder
Commando Area 10
Wheelie Level 3
Movie 58%
Street Hawk Level 20, 66,000ish
Skooldaze 12 shields
Highway Encounter Completed
Green Beret All screens done, 86,650
Knight Tyme Completed
Skyfox Beat 'chess' level as Wing Commander
Gunfright 'Milky Bar Kid'
Oracle's Cave Completed
Airwolf Three scientists
Full Throttle First on all tracks after 3 laps
Spy Hunter 112,000
Steve Davies 48 break
Bruce Lee Killed wizard 9 times
Starion Completed
Sabre Wulf Completed 98%
Juggernaut 47,110
Winter Games Jump 227; Hot dog 9.2; Speed skating 37.5secs; Figure 1.2; Biathlon 1.35 mins; Bobsleigh 25.81; Freeskating 3.8
Fighter Pilot Shot down 4 enemies
Alien 8 12 chambers
Glass Intergalactic dustman
Quazatron Four cities freed
Paul Simcox, Sutton Coldfield

Tantalus Completed
Batman Completed
Jack the Nipper Completed
NOMAD Completed
Rollercoaster Completed
Fairlight Completed
Knight Tyme Completed
Starquake Completed with 97%
Popeye Need 3 hearts
Highway Encounter Completed **Skool Daze** Completed
Green Beret Half way through prison camp
Ghost N' Goblins Got to monster's lair
Quazatron Two cities
Pyjamarama Completed
Ant Attack Completed
Stop The Express Stopped 4 times
Andrew Shand, Edinburgh

Harrier Attack Completed
Spy Hunter 10,131,650
Chuckie Egg Level 12
Commando Level 7
Wheelie Completed
Winter Games Jump 223.6; Hot Dog 10; Speed 40.0; Figure 3.5; Biathlon 1.05 mins; Bobsleigh 21.06 secs; Free Skating 6.9
Frank Bruno 5th boxer demolished
Saboteur Completed 35,000
Exploding Fist 9th Dan
Chris Lamb, Marlborough

Mikie 327,400
Starquake Completed 86%
Green Beret 119,150 Zone 4
Spy Hunter 691,425
Keith Rutledge

Cyclone Two missions completed
Yie Ar Kung Fu 78,420
Bombjack 615,340
World Cup Carnival Won 12-1
Stephen (Falco) Rutledge

Pole Position 1,416,320
Quazatron 45,310
Frank Bruno Completed (know what I mean)
Spy Hunter 426,500
Kevin (Zippy) Rutledge

Hypersports 329,619
Yie Ar Kung Fu 92,600
Exploding Fist 10th dan (with one hand?)
Fighting Warrior 214,640
Daniel (Ninja) Rutledge

The Hobbit 100%
Heros of Karn Completed
Three Weeks in Paradise 100%
Rambo Completed Level 1
Super Gran Sheet 3
Neil Graves

Reviews

LERNON ESPERANTO

In house language expert Tony Flanagan (well, he used to be an English Teacher), takes a look at a new package which aims to impart the rudiments of Esperanto. . . .

Producer: Lez Peranto Ltd
Retail Price: **£15.00 inc P&P**
Author: **Les Hartridge**

Saluton readers! As you can vidas, mi estas lernanta Esperanto, per la help de *Esperanto First Half*, a computer/ audio cassette package. This has been produced for the Spectrum by Les Hartridge, a retired schoolmaster from Croydon, who is one of two directors of LEZ PERANTO LTD. For those of you not fully conversant with the subject, Esperanto is an international language which was invented just under a century ago by a Polish chappy called Ludwik Zamenhof. It was his desire that Esperanto would become a lingua franca (just as Latin had been in the past) so that nations would be able to converse in a common tongue. This, he believed, would foster good relations between countries and contribute to world peace.

Esperanto is a phonetic system but unique in that one letter always corresponds to one sound and one sound only. There are twenty-eight letters in the alphabet, twenty-two of which are the same as ours. Most of the word roots are Latin-based (but don't be put off if you did Latin at school as there aren't millions of declensions to memorise).

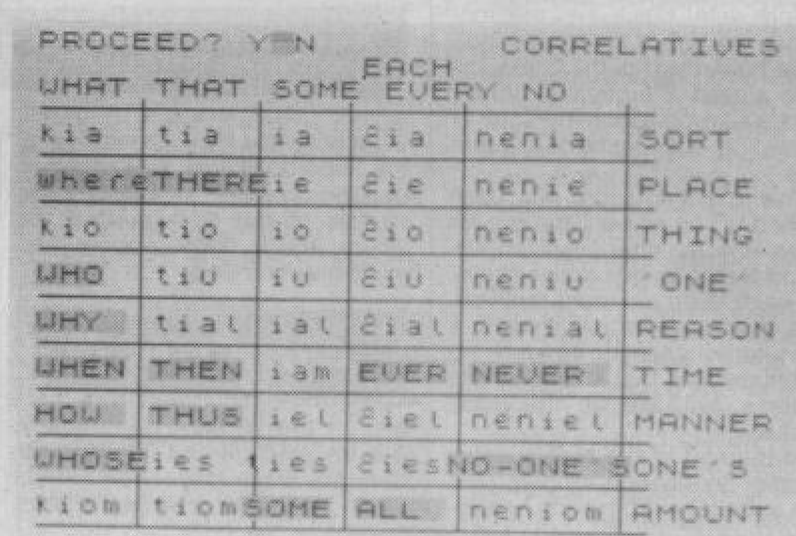
Somewhat refreshingly, Esperanto contains none of the irritating idiosyncracies which make our own language and that of other nations so problematic. You won't find any silent consonants, irregular verbs or perverse grammatical constructions in Esperanto. The whole system is entirely logical. For example, all nouns end in 'o', all adjectives in 'a' and the present tense of all verbs in 'as'. Identical to English, the definite article, 'la', remains the same whether the noun is masculine, feminine, singular or plural, which, if like moi, you hated French at school, has got to be a plus!

Esperanto First Half comprises three sections: Espotext, Espogram and Espoword, which are designed to educate the student to what in relative terms would be GCE 'O' level standard.

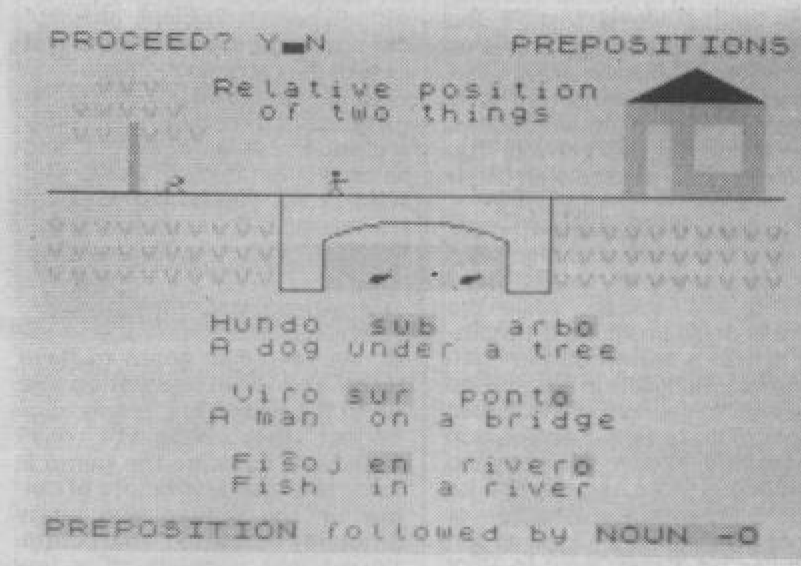
Espotext is a ten lesson course, which provides a thorough grammatical grounding in Esperanto. There is a short introduction on the origin and development of the language and then the lessons begin. The lessons detail the various parts of speech and their respective endings. Other sections deal with compound verbs, adverbs and other essentials of grammar. However, the grammatical slant of the program's content is by no means obtrusive. The text avoids jargon and is easily understood — all grammatical terms are clearly explained and accompanied by useful examples.

Conveniently, you have some control over the pace at which you work — at every stage you have the option to continue or to return to the index where all the various sections are listed. The text, therefore, never disappears before you've had time to read it; indeed, you can read it as many times as you want before you move on. To consolidate the learning process, there are a variety of exercises designed to test grammar, vocabulary and translating ability.¼

Screen-wise, there is nothing novel about this program — most of the time it's text on a blank background. Obviously, too much colour would only get in the way of the text, so it's probably just as well. In some sections, however, graphics are used to good effect to facilitate understanding. In the Prepositions section, for example, a colourful bridge scene helps clarify what these items of grammar are and how they are used in Esperanto.



A table of correlatives — all part of getting to grips with ESPERANTO — THE FIRST HALF



A little graphical assistance is provided when it comes to learning about Esperanto prepositions . . .

Once you have worked your way through Espotext, you can test your grasp of Esperanto grammar by loading the Espogram program. In the lower half of the screen is the beginning of a sentence containing one, two or several blanks. Given at the top of the screen are twenty numbered suffixes. The blanks are filled in by pressing the appropriate numerical key and in this way you build up a sentence of which there are fifty stored. Any errors you have made are shown at the bottom and any corrections are briefly explained. Your score is also given at the bottom of the screen.

As well as improving your grammar, the package — as any language package should — aims to increase your vocabulary. This is where the Espoword program can help. It consists of 729 Esperanto words and their English translations all of which are relevant to everyday life. On manual display there is a choice of any of nine blocks (eighty-one words). In Auto display you choose one-third part of any block, that is, twenty-seven words, and you choose the time interval before the answer is given.

Clearly, the written word is only one aspect of a two-horned beast. The audio tape, therefore, introduces the learner to the pleasures of spoken Esperanto. First of all, the Espohear section, demonstrates nineteen Esperanto sounds which are either new to the English ear or whose use is limited. These are then demonstrated using fifty-seven words. With Esposay, you are required to pronounce each of these. First the tape gives the word number listed in the notes, you pronounce the word and then the tape pronounces the word as it should be pronounced. Espoself and Esponext give some indication of what sentences of fluent Esperanto sound like.

Supplementing the tapes are detailed notes which reinforce and expand upon what has already been explained. These contain some marvellous ice-breakers for the avid party-goer — such gems like, 'Do you eat water?' or 'Is your mother a man?'

Still, it is easy to be flippant about Esperanto because it's an 'artificial' language. But when one considers there are over 100,000 speakers world-wide, over 30,000 books published in Esperanto and approximately 50 national associations, someone somewhere must be taking it seriously. There is an idealistic thrust underlying Esperanto that alone sets it apart from 'natural' languages, and its adherents reveal something of a missionary mentality. Indeed, you may have found Les Hartridge spreading the word (or wordo) from his mini-stand at the PCW Show this year . . .

All in all, this package is bursting at the seams with information and is well worth getting if you are interested in mastering Esperanto. There's even a brain-twisting arithmetical puzzle game thrown in for free — *Flipit 86*!

HEAD COACH

Producer: Addictive Games
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Simon Davies**

As Head Coach, it's your task to manage an American Football team to the heady heights of success. You need to keep a keen eye on the player market, getting rid of useless players and snapping up the odd bargain. Careful study of other teams is also needed to select a squad to counter the strengths of the opposition and take advantage of its weaknesses.

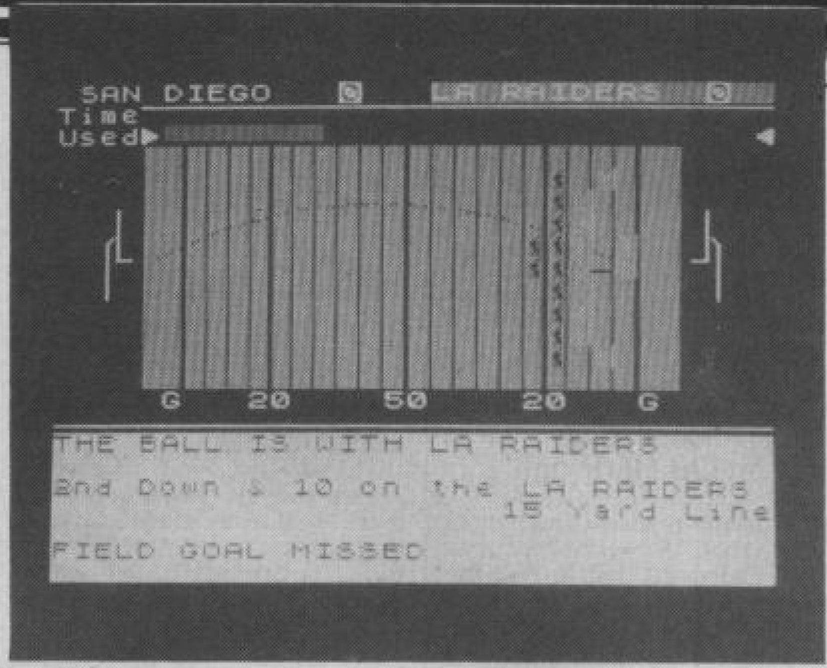
Initially, you are given a choice of one of the twenty-four teams which are grouped in fours, in six divisions. There are four skill levels: novice, rookie, veteran and all-pro. A thirty-two player squad is made up of kickers, quarterbacks, running-backs, defensive-backs, line-backers, offensive linemen, tight ends, wide receivers and defensive linemen. Players are numbered according to their positions, with offense, defense and special team groupings listed on separate screens. The team lists display various information on each of the 1500 players in the program — age, skill rating, fitness and form. Trading, the equivalent of the British soccer transfer system, takes place on weekdays.

Before each game, the comparative strengths of both sides are detailed on the screen. The pitch condition and wind velocity are also given before kick-off — important when deciding which 'plays' to go for. The success of a field goal depends on the kicker's distance from the posts and his skill.

Matches are played out graphically on the green gridiron. Your team plays in blue against the opposition's black. A red bar across the top of the screen indicates how much of the game has been played. If a game is drawn, there's a tie-breaker in the form of extra-time — the first side to score wins.

After the final score has been flashed up on screen, the results of the other matches are given, followed by the league tables showing each team's current position. This is sometimes followed by a news item suggesting new training techniques or that a player has become available on the trade market.

At the end of the twelve game season, six division winners plus one extra team from each conference enter the playoffs leading to the Superbowl final. A twenty day period follows, set aside for the six rounds of the College Draft in which about thirty players are available per round.



San Diego play the LA Raiders — it's no score all round and a Field Goal has just been missed

CRITICISM

●" **On the whole I don't really get on with games like this as they are often too complicated, brain taxing or just badly presented — this is one such.** Head Coach **does not require a great deal of user participation so it's very hard to get into or play successfully — it gets quite monotonous. The program responds slowly to keyed input and there are long delays in between some screens because it's written in BASIC. The graphics are generally sloppy. The sound is also minimal — a few spot effects during the game and a few trashy tunettes on the title screen or when you**

KANE

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **John Darnell and Simon Freeman**

In the days of the wild and woolly West times were hard. If you happened to be the sheriff then times were doubly hard as people tended to have a healthy disrespect for anything or anyone in authority. In this game, Kane must try and make peace with the Indians and keep law and order in his town. Kane needs a steady hand, a sure eye and a fast gun. What with runaway trains, ghost town ambushes and the perils of the prairie, he really has his work cut out for him.

The game is divided up into four sections, each of which must be completed before you can progress to the next one. There is a practice mode, where you can flip through all the screens before playing the game for real.

Section one involves shooting birds with a bow and arrow — the feathered ones are traded with the Indians for lives in the later stages. Kane starts with ten arrows and loses one for every bird that is missed. Every time he hits a bird, the number of arrows in his pouch stays the same. The birds are shot by lining them up in the mobile sights before pressing fire. Points are scored for every bird impaled.

Section Two is a ride across the prairie. With his trusty steed beneath him, the sheriff must jump the obstacles which present themselves in his path. A misjudged leap results in the horse throwing Kane and a life is lost. If the treacherous patch of prairie is negotiated then Kane arrives in a deserted ghost town. But is it really deserted? Some mean outlaws start taking pot shots at you. You reach for your gun and start blasting.

Ten baddies in the town must be shot. The number of men killed is shown in red on the left hand side of the screen, while the number of mean critters left shooting at you is shown on the right. Kane has six bullets in his gun and must run to the right of the screen to get more bullets. Baddies pop up from the saloon, the bank and the general store and need to be shot before they disappear or shoot you instead. Once all ten baddies have been sent to Boot Hill, you can progress to the Train Journey in section four.

A train is out of control and only you can stop it and save the helpless passengers. Kane has to negotiate another nasty piece of prairie, strangely similar to section two, jumping over all the obstacles on his trusty nag. The train must be caught up with and stopped within a certain time limit and once the passengers are safe, the first level of the game is complete.

There are three levels to the game, each increasing in difficulty and speed. Have you the guts and determination to clean up the wild West or will you end up on Boot Hill instead?

CRITICISM

●" **MASTERTRONIC seem to have taken their time translating this on to the Spectrum — and to be honest they shouldn't have bothered. Eyewise the game is fairly attractive, with lots of colour on the screen and some smoothly animated characters. Sound just consists of a few spot effects which are very accurate but sound lonely in a game that doesn't involve too much frenzied activity. The first stage — shooting the birds, is very inaccurate and I found my arrows constantly going straight through the belly of the bird without affecting it at all. The first jumping stage is far too easy and getting past the 'shoot-out' stage is a doddle, but the final jumping stage proved far to difficult to warrant plodding through the first three parts. The game is very basic and doesn't require any brains at all. Kane may appeal the the younger games player, but whether even they will be addicted enough to load it up again is very much in doubt. "**

●" *This game suffers from a lack of screens. It would be fun if there were about ten more sections to battle through. As it stands, there isn't really any lasting interest after completing the first four screens, which are very easy. The graphics are a mixture of nicely animated lumpy characters and garish colours which, on the whole, fail to please the eye. The sound is also a bit limp. There are no tunes and only a few spot effects. I don't recommend the game as it gets very monotonous after a short time. "*

●" I can't say, I like *Kane* much. The graphics are pretty bad, and the game lacks enough content, despite its four stages, to make it addictive. Playability wise, *Kane* is fair, but even for £1.99 it doesn't seem like much value for money. The horse riding sequence isn't

Kane rides like the wind due to all those cowboy beans — he must stop the train and jump the desert vegetation that gets in the way



win. On the whole I didn't find this game playable or compelling so I wouldn't really recommend it. "

● " *Well, it had to come sometime. How could anyone live without a follow-up to the mega* Football Manager? *Looking at* Head Coach, *I know that I certainly could. It's got abysmal graphics, and is very difficult to get into, especially if you're not heavily into American Football.* Head Coach *is fun to play, however, if you've got the time to get started and once into it I think it highly likely that it'll be a long time before you're out. Addictiveness is one thing that* ADDICTIVE *games do have, even if they are lacking in every conceivable technical detail. Worth a look if you're a real Am Foot freak, but otherwise, unless you really flipped over* Football Manager, *I'd recommend you stay away. "*

● " Now look guys! I knows a thing or two about American Footy, and you have quarters in the game. *Head Coach* doesn't! It also tells you that your next play is the last one of the game. This is just not on — American Football also has two minute warnings, throwing the ball out of play to stop the clock and time-outs. The game is inaccurate, and the player selection is terrible. I was unhappy to see that you can't pick individual players for each position, and you can't give players names. *Head Coach* is not only inaccurate, but terribly boring to play. If people buy this thinking that they are getting an American Football game, they'll be unhappy — it does nothing to enhance the image of the game in this country. Fancy an arcade Am Foot game? Get *Superbowl*. A bit more on the strategy side? You wouldn't go far wrong with the ARGUS game, but ADDICTIVE have got it all wrong. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: most of the keyboard used
Joystick: not really needed
Keyboard play: slow responses to input
Use of colour: very BASIC, only necessary to decorate the text
Graphics: mainly text, with a few pwetty pictures here and there
Sound: few spot effects, with an awful Yankee Doodle tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: field screen plus menus
General rating: Neither a very playable nor accurate simulation

Use of computer	22%
Graphics	31%
Playability	36%
Getting started	28%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	32%
Overall	33%

exactly difficult, and the gun fighting bit isn't any good at all. The first part is probably the best, and even that isn't up to much. Though it might just be fun for a while, I don't think *Kane* is really worth the money asked for it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, N left, M right, Z fire/jump
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: average
Use of colour: good, lots used
Graphics: not amazingly good
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: three
Screens: four
General rating: Not terrible, but nothing special, either

Use of computer	46%
Graphics	50%
Playability	46%
Getting started	59%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	53%
Overall	54%

OLYMPIAD '86

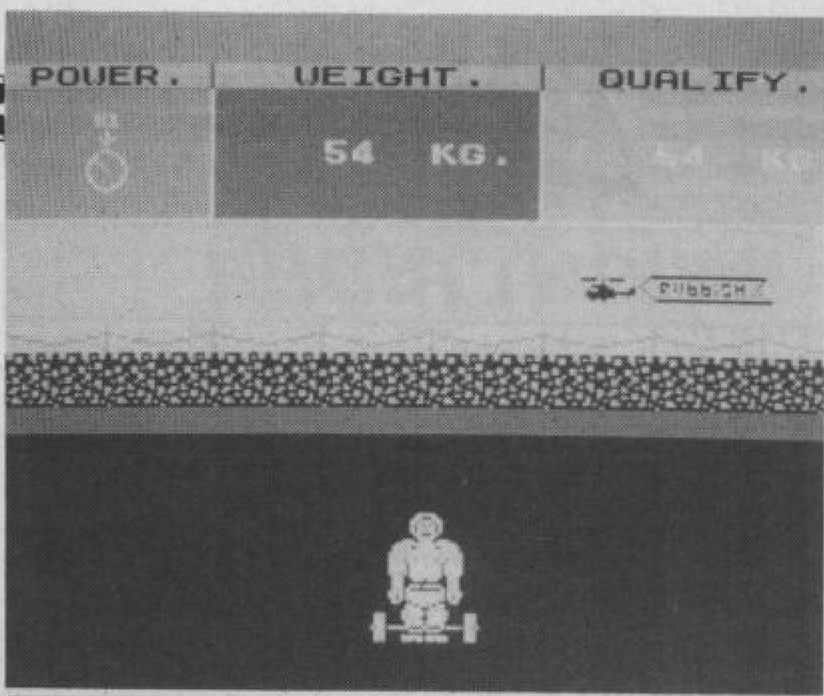
Producer: Atlantis
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **B Jones**

Here's another sporting simulation designed to test your skills in five events, this time at a budget price. Weight lifting, canoeing, the 200 metre sprint, shooting and discus throwing all feature, and what's more you don't need any fancy equipment or months of pre-season training to compete.

At the start of the game three lives are supplied, and a life is lost each time the player fails to qualify in an event. After each event the scoreboard appears on screen, updating the points won and number of lives remaining, and at the end of a circuit round the five events, a high score table monitors performance and medals won.

This pentathlon commences with weight lifting, and a well timed press of the Q key is needed to build up enough strength to heave the weights off the ground. A hand on the power clock at the top of the screen whizzes round and has to be stopped at the 'noon' position for maximum power. If a lift is successful, you keep going until the qualifying weight is reached. Failure costs a life and a smug helicopter flies past with a banner that reads "rubbish".

To get through the canoeing event the O and P keys are used to manoeuvre a kayak down a slalom of boulders which poke out from beneath the water. A meter at the bottom of screen shows how much of the course is left to get through, and contact with a boulder results in failure.



Poor old Cam. He prodded the Q key at the wrong moment, stopped the clock too soon and gave the helicopter pilot the chance to fly out and be rude . . .

The 200 metre sprint has your runner scooting along a seemingly never-ending track. Speed and distance bars show how the race is going, and the power clock method is used again, this time to build up speed — misjudge the timing of the prod on the Q key and speed is lost, but get it right and the runner accelerates. At the end of a race the qualifying time and actual time taken are shown, and the rude helicopter pilot flies past if you fail . . .

Skeet shooting puts the player in control of a cross hair sight and the idea is to blast the qualifying number of skeets out of the air. Little meters at the bottom of the screen reveal how many skeets are yet to be released and the number of shots remaining. Skeets whizz into the air, launched alternately from a position behind trees on either side of the screen. As usual, the chopper pilot is waiting in the wings to mock. . . .

The fifth event, the discus, involves two little power clocks — one has to be stopped dead on 'noon' with the A key to determine the angle of the throw, and another stopped with the Q key to determine the power behind the throw. And yes, the pilot's waiting!

CRITICISM

● **" This game is bad in every sense of the word. The graphics are awful, the colour is messy and unattractive, the scenario unoriginal, and the whole thing is just one big lump of unplayability and unaddictiveness. It's not a joystick-killer — but the clock stopping is rather inaccurate . . . Hint: prod the Q key when the needle is at the 10 o'clock position during the sprint for maximum power, rather than when it is at noon. Even for a couple of pounds this game is poor — you might want to persevere until you've seen all five screens, but I doubt you'd want to come back to it "**

● " *The graphics are some of the best* ATLANTIS *have ever produced — not such a hard feat — and consist of a good loading screen and some fairly large, smoothly animated characters. The sound is very basic, involving some sound loops up the musical scale, and then some down the scale — WOW! What variety . . .* Olympiad 86 *contains very little to keep the armchair sportsman interested further than seeing the loading screen. I expected more keyboard/joystick bashing, all I got was a consistent pressing of keys at long intervals. I didn't even feel panicked, never mind breaking into a sweat! "*

● " The trend for track and field games ended months ago, and this latecomer doesn't add much to the genre, even at the low asking price. The gameplay is very slow and on two of the five screens you only have to use one key so it all gets very monotonous. There are no tunes, the spot effects are minimal and the gameplay is hardly exciting — a mix between unplayability and impossibility. I'd keep well clear of this one if I were you, as it is very primitive. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q, A, O, P, SPACE: varies from event to event
Joystick: not applicable
Keyboard play: not always an accurate response
Use of colour: lots of it; a bit garish
Graphics: nothing special
Sound: BEEPy spot effects
Skill levels: gets progressively harder
Screens: five one-screen events
General rating: Even as a budget title this game adds nothing to the decathlon/sports genre

Use of computer	31%
Graphics	28%
Playability	21%
Getting started	39%
Addictive qualities	23%
Value for money	31%
Overall	26%

KNIGHT RIDER

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author:

It's here at last! *Knight Rider* has finally been released by OCEAN. Michael, his co-ordinator Deven and the super car Kitt are once again on the trail of baddies. At their Atlanta HQ the duo receive a message from Deven, informing them that a bunch of terrorists are up to no good — Deven also hints that the terrorists may have designs on world domination . . . Eeek!

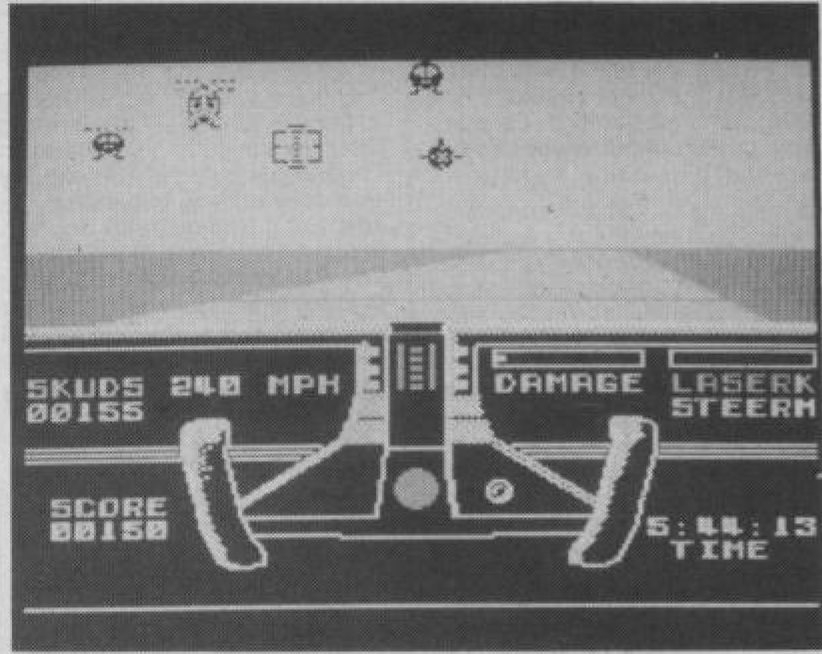
Michael and Kitt set off on a perilous mission to try and stop those darn terrorists from starting World War Three. The only trouble is, nobody actually knows where all this terrorist activity is taking place, so Kitt and Michael have to drive like mad things all over America at insane speeds, collecting clues before the time limit on the mission runs out.

At the beginning of the game you are presented with a map of the United States and a menu of cities which can be visited. Kitt passes on a message from Deven suggesting a city in which there is terrorist activity. Now it's up to you and Kitt to zoom down to that particular city as fast as possible to see what's going on. Kitt is a pretty unusual car and unstoppable. Once on the road, enemy helicopters rise up from the horizon trying to inflict serious damage. A meter on Kitt's dashboard clocks up the damage and when the level gets too high you have to get Kitt repaired at the next town — which is rather time consuming.

Mike can drive with Kitt firing the lasers, or Kitt can drive (more slowly) and let Mike do the shooting. A digital speedometer reveals the rate of travel, and another milometer ticks down as the destination city gets closer. Lasers, of course, overheat and too much shooting leaves the car defenceless while the lasers cool.

On arrival in a city the view automatically changes. Mike enters a building patrolled by guards. The action is viewed from above, and as Mike never carries a gun, he must avoid the enemy by sheer skill and some speedy footwork as he picks a route to the other side of the maze. Contact with a guard sends Mike back to the beginning of the current location — very time consuming. New orders scroll across the bottom of the screen once a maze has been negotiated and it's off to the next city, on the trail of those power-crazed terrorists.

The opening menu allows you to select a plot to the game, or the scenario can be allocated at random. A time limit, monitored by a clock on Kitt's instrument panel, is set and the mission fails if the time expires before all the locations have been visited and maze problems solved. Then it's back to Atlanta, and time to start yet another mission to save the world.



Zooming along the yellow brick road to the next city with Kitt looking after the lasers and Mike in the driving seat pulling 240 mph. Blow the choppers out of the sky . . .

CRITICISM

● **" Well, I wonder how many people will be disappointed with** Knight Rider**after waiting over a year. I didn't really expect that much from this game, as American-all-action-TV-series games are normally pretty dire. This one was a shock! The graphics are appalling on the driving**

BULLSEYE

Producer: Macsen
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **GBA Cyf**

MACSEN specialise in producing computerised versions of well-known TV game shows, and this darts game hosted by Bully the bull in his cute striped overall first appeared on TV sets tuned to Central TV. This two-player game has four rounds, with a practice option available to help you gain confidence when throwing the darts at the dartboard.

There are nine skill levels in the game, selected at the start before the players' names are keyed in. Darts are aimed by using the cursor keys to move a hand below the dartboard to the left and right. A strength bar display in the status area monitors the power of the throw — the harder the throw, the nearer to the top of the dartboard the dart lands. The strength meter rises when the Cursor Up key is held down — releasing the key throws the dart.

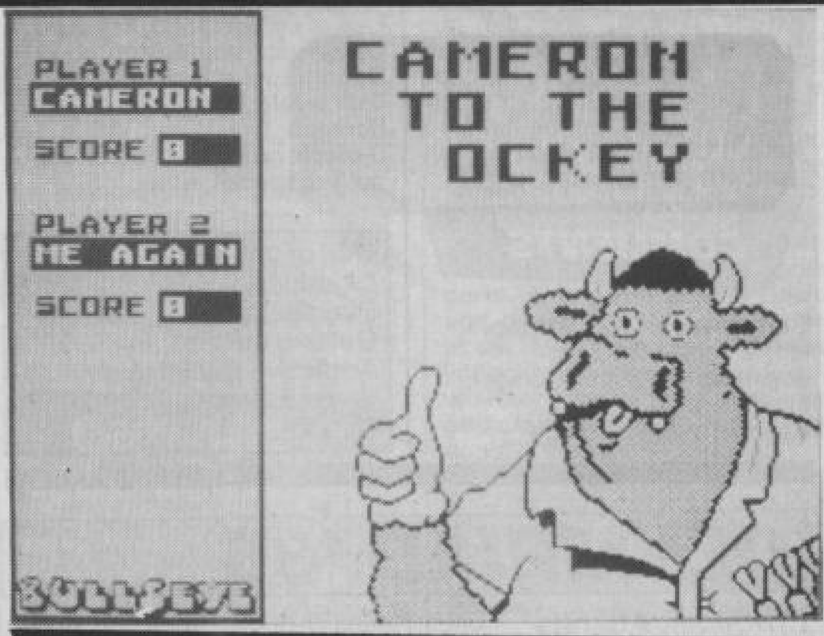
Each player is summoned to the ockey in turn by Bully. A dartboard with ten sections labelled A to J is provided in section one. Each letter represents a different subject. Select a subject to answer questions on and then throw a dart so that it lands inside the segment of your choice. A miss means you must answer a question on whichever subject your dart lands on. Score a hit, and bonus points are awarded before the question is asked. There is only a certain amount of time in which each question must be answered, but players usually get two attempts.

Round two consists of regular darts throwing. Each player is called to the ockey three times and throws three darts, going for the highest score. Whoever has the highest score after each turn gets to answer a general knowledge question which wins more points if answered correctly. An incorrect answer gives the question over to the opponent. Then it's on to round three . . .

Whoever is winning at this stage in the game has a bonus question, and the chance to collect more points. On round three the player is presented with a dartboard with sixteen segments on it, eight black and eight red. Each red segment is worth bonus points, while the black areas don't matter. Nine arrows are supplied and the bonus value of a red area is won if a single dart lands in it. However, if you hit the same red segment twice, the bonus value is deducted from your score.

Section four is purely for gamblers. The leader is asked whether he or she wants to gamble the points collected so far — gambling is optional and if the leader declines then the chance passes over to the other player. A regular dartboard is presented on the screen, and scoring over 110 points with the four darts supplied doubles the score if you decide to gamble. Score less than 110 and the score amassed is halved.

Two additional question files are supplied on the cassette should you get too familiar with those in the basic set, and a mini-league table records players' progress in the games played during a session.



Cameron Pound plays with yet another Alter Ego, this time taking himself on at BULLSEYE

CRITICISM

● **"**Bullseye **is not a good game. Frankly, I don't like it at all. The graphics are too big, and the game is difficult to control. The tunes are annoying, and they make long waits necessary. As far as playability and addictivity**

screen — the road jerks from side to side badly and the characters are poorly defined, but the graphics are quite nice on the other screens. The bird's eye view works, and the characters are animated well. The sound is fairly good with a nice tune on the title screen and a few good spot effects. Overall though, there's not much game when it comes to actually playing it. "

● "*I felt that* Knight Rider *was very shallow in content. Graphically, the game starts off very promisingly with a superb loading screen but my hopes were soon dashed when I jumped into Kitt and found that driving through the States was like driving over the sea on a sandy road! I found the game extremely easy to play, and soon felt I had played all there was. The four plots are very easy to solve and most people would only spend a few days playing the game through. No doubt the* Knight Rider *name will ensure this game gets to Number One in a few charts very soon! I still wouldn't buy it . . .* "

● " If you're more into enjoying the games that you buy, *Knight Rider* is one game that should be avoided. Really, after the amount of time spent developing this I'd have thought OCEAN could have done a lot better. Gameplay is very simplistic, and quickly gets tedious — there's no real impetus to keep playing once you've gone through a few driving and maze sequences and some of the graphics are just not up to scratch. Don't buy it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: W up, S down, N left, M right, Q fire, P pause, CAPS SHIFT and SYM SHIFT quit and restart
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: a bit plain, but no clashes
Graphics: dodgy on the driving screen, okay on the mazes and map
Sound: neat tune, adequate spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: map screen, scrolling road and maze section
General rating: After the interminably long wait, a major disappointment — simplistic gameplay and nothing special on offer

Use of computer	56%
Graphics	60%
Playability	44%
Getting started	58%
Addictive qualities	39%
Value for money	38%
Overall	39%

are concerned, I don't think that Bullseye is worth commenting on at all. The game is, in a word, bad. If you're a dedicated addict of the TV series, then a) I'm very sorry for you, and b) you might like this game. Otherwise, leave well alone. "

● "*Ugh! What a horrible game show, who in their right mind would make it into a computer game? Well* MACSEN *have and to tell you the truth they haven't done as bad a job on it as they could have done. At first sight it looks pretty enough: there are a few nice big and colourful cartoon-like graphics and the board is well defined. There is a little colour clash, but it isn't really that noticeable. The sound is about average for this type of game; there is a tune on the title screen and a couple of spot effects during play. The gameplay, unfortunately is not half as good as the presentation — long waits between screens and slow response to keyboard input makes this already uninspiring game very monotonous indeed.* "

● "I suppose you can't expect much from a computer game that is based on a TV program like *Bullseye* — and the final result gives you even less. I must admit that *Bullseye* isn't as bad as some of the games that MACSEN have brought out — but what the game lacks is answers. As with *Play Your Cards Right*, you can get the question wrong and no one will tell you the answer — most infuriating. The graphics are quite good, with nice drawings of Bully and a neatly laid out dart board. Unfortunately TV quiz games on computer just don't work in my opinion. . . . half the fun is audience reaction and compering, and this is sadly missing from computer versions. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Cursor left, right and up
Joystick: not applicable
Keyboard play: a bit too responsive for fine control
Use of colour: okay
Graphics: detailed dartboards and adequate Bully
Sound: tune and occasional spot effects
Skill levels: nine
Screens: one for each of the four stages
General rating: A straightforward and rather uninspiring version of an uninspiring TV show

Use of computer	47%
Graphics	47%
Playability	49%
Getting started	60%
Addictive qualities	35%
Value for money	37%
Overall	45%

TENNIS

Producer: Imagine
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author:

Did you thrill to Wimbledon this year? Do you dream that one day you too will beat Boris Becker or thrash Martina Navratilova in three straight sets? Well, *Tennis*, IMAGINE's conversion of the Konami arcade game might help realise your dreams to some extent.

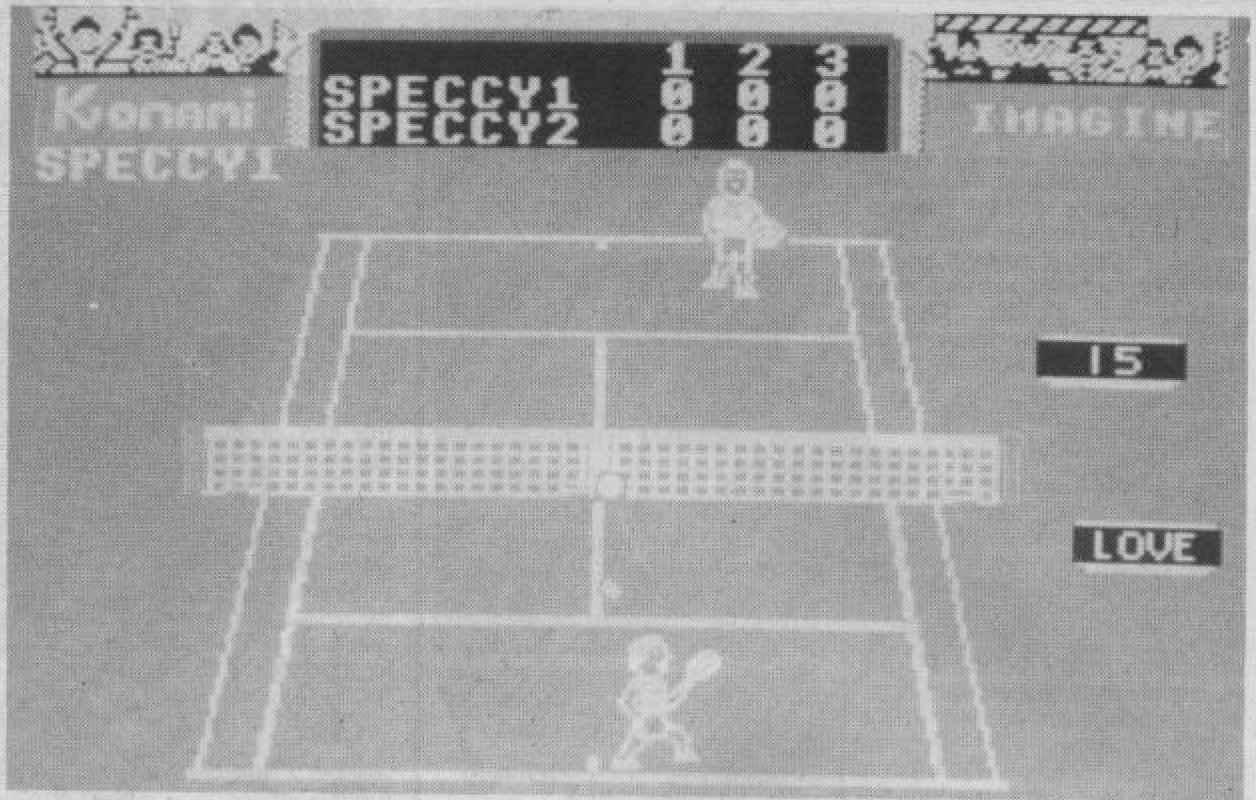
In this version of tennis, the computer can play singles with one player or doubles against two players fighting for keyboard space. Alternatively, two humans can fight it out, head to head. The scoring and rules are taken from real tennis, except the computer acts as umpire too, flashing decisions onto a central screen at the back of the court. There's no room of argument: if the ball lands on a line then the shot is 'in'; if it lands outside a boundary line the shot is 'out'.

Players take it in turns to serve, with the service changing after each game. To serve, press fire to lob the ball into the air, and fire again to send the ball flying over the net. The timing of the second press of the fire button is crucial as it determines where the ball lands. If the ball lands 'out', the computer flashes a message onto the umpire screen and the server gets a second go. If you muck the second serve up as well then the point goes to your opponent.

The screen shows a tennis court as seen from the stands at one end. The direction keys or joystick control the movement of the player(s) on the court, and a prod of the fire button at the appropriate moment makes a shot — the stroke played depends on the direction in which the volleying player is facing.

During each game the score for each player or team is shown on the right of the court, and at the end of game the score is transferred to the main score board.

The audience watches anxiously from the very top of the screen. You must play your best as they're all rooting for you in amongst the bottles of bubbly and strawberries and cream.



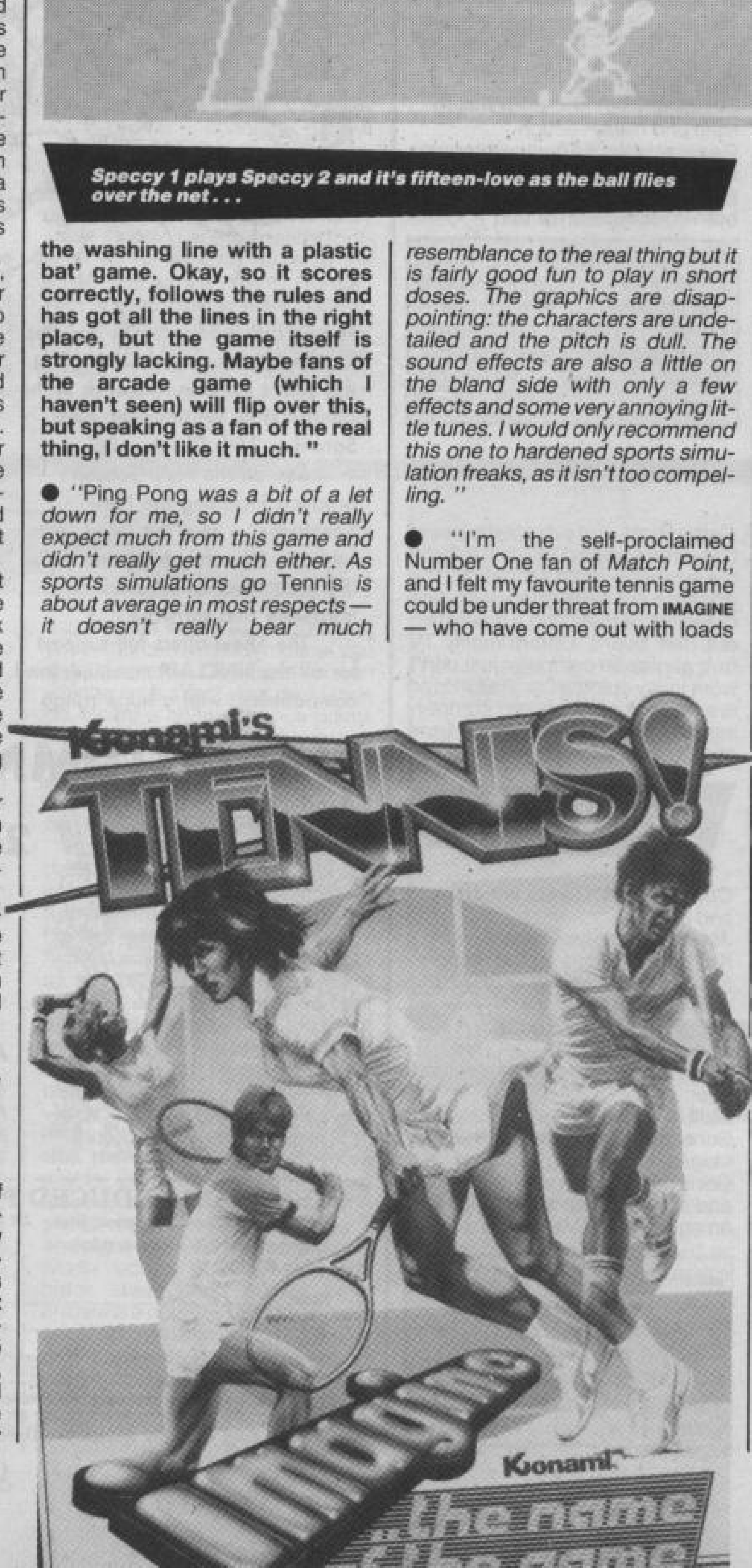
Speccy 1 plays Speccy 2 and it's fifteen-love as the ball flies over the net . . .

CRITICISM

● **" After the delights of IMAGINE's *Ping Pong*, I was hoping for an equally great follow up. Being both an avid table tennis player, and a bit of a tennis nut, I find it difficult to get excited about this game, especially as its sister program is so good. Compared to a good, challenging game of the real thing, IMAGINE's version is more of a 'knock the sponge ball over the washing line with a plastic bat' game. Okay, so it scores correctly, follows the rules and has got all the lines in the right place, but the game itself is strongly lacking. Maybe fans of the arcade game (which I haven't seen) will flip over this, but speaking as a fan of the real thing, I don't like it much. "**

● "*Ping Pong was a bit of a let down for me, so I didn't really expect much from this game and didn't really get much either. As sports simulations go* Tennis *is about average in most respects — it doesn't really bear much resemblance to the real thing but it is fairly good fun to play in short doses. The graphics are disappointing: the characters are undetailed and the pitch is dull. The sound effects are also a little on the bland side with only a few effects and some very annoying little tunes. I would only recommend this one to hardened sports simulation freaks, as it isn't too compelling.* "

● "I'm the self-proclaimed Number One fan of *Match Point*, and I felt my favourite tennis game could be under threat from IMAGINE — who have come out with loads of good sports simulations on the Spectrum. After playing their conversion of Konami's *Tennis* for quite some time, I came away feeling that the game was lacking, both in the overall number of shots you can play and in overall realism. I found you had very little control, if any, over the type of shot you could play. The game always seemed to be on the move — if the computer player wasn't moving frantically between 8 and 10 pixels to the left and right, it was the constant, uncontrollable tapping of your player's foot on the court. I found this extremely irritating and tiring on the eyes. *Tennis* didn't play properly: it takes a while to get used to the ball bouncing at different heights at the most unreal moments, and the players seemed to like the idea of running and hitting the ball at the same time. Graphically, this game far outbashes the old PSION game, but as to who gets the *Match Point* . . . Need I say more? "



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: mainly monochromatic
Graphics: not wonderfully detailed
Sound: burbly tunelet and spot beeps
Skill levels: one
Screens: just the court
General rating: A disappointing tennis game — not the strongest of the Konami conversions by a long chalk

Use of computer	66%
Graphics	64%
Playability	59%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	58%
Value for money	59%
Overall	**60%**

ICUPS

Producer: Thor
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **The Thor team**

ICUPS, the International Commission for Universal Problem Solving, are looking for special agents of the highest calibre. Obviously, they feel they have to test the ability of any prospective agent and so this prominent organisation has devised two tests designed to assess just how well a would-be agent functions under stress. It's no good having any Tom, Dick or Harry or even a Wally when there's an important mission to complete. The game falls into two sections, both of which are designed to test you to the limit.

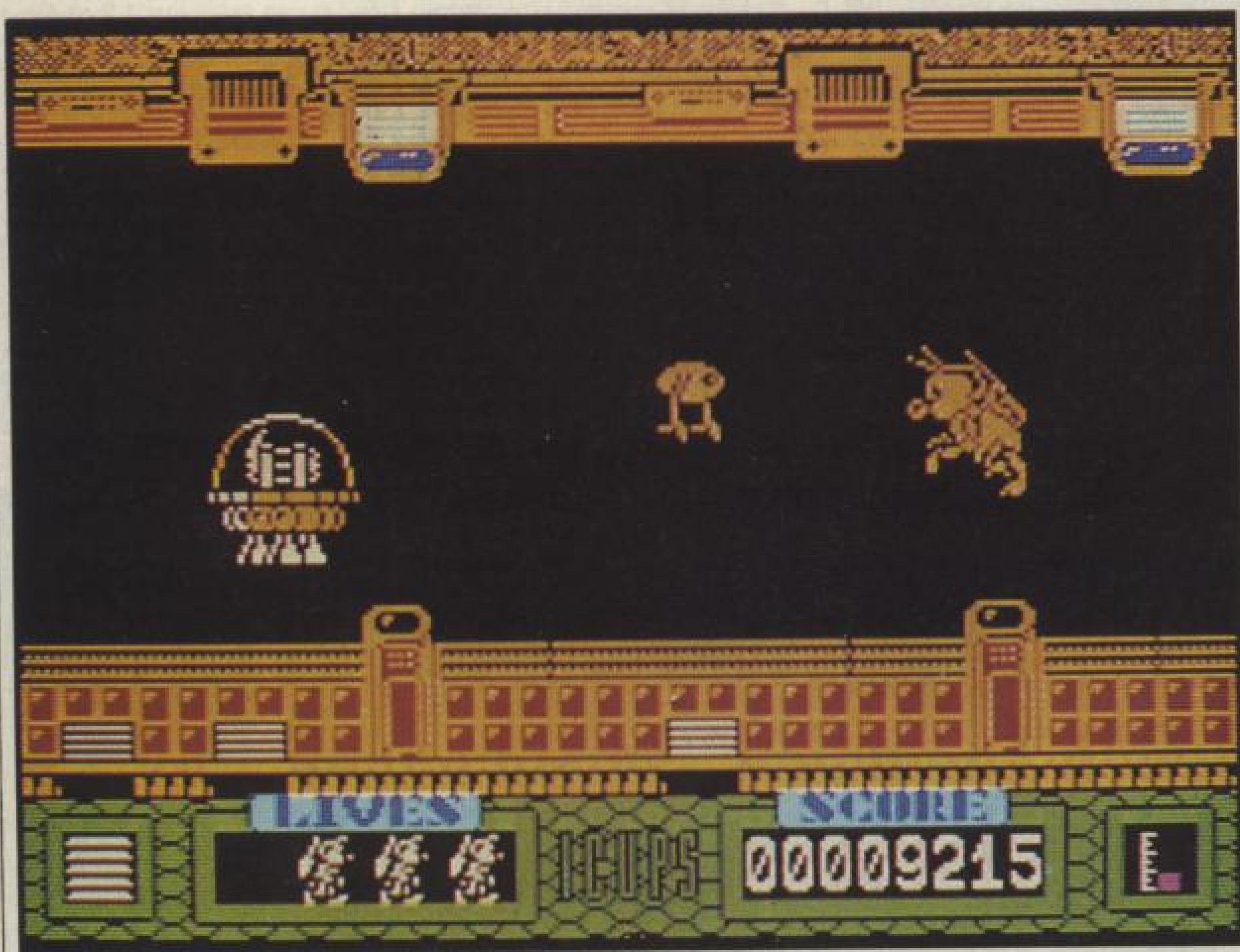
The action begins in a space tunnel with you in control of an Interstellar Escort Ship. The screen scrolls downwards as you travel upscreen through three sections of space which ultimately lead to the enemy starship. Along the way you must dodge and weave a way through swarms of remote control alien craft. At times it's very much like aerial bumping cars as enemy craft, not lethal in themselves, try to nudge you into the concrete walls either side of the tunnel or into the more lethal yellow craft. A collision with one of these is enough to lose one of your four lives, and there are the usual torpedoes to avoid. The yellow flying saucers cannot fire but must be avoided as collision is fatal. The other yellow craft cannot be destroyed so it's really a matter of keeping clear.

As you proceed through the three sections the score and the area (either A, B or C) are indicated. The tunnel walls of each section are different in colour so it's clear when one section has been completed. A small window in the right hand corner shows a laughing face when you lose a life — just to rub it in. Lives are indicated by icons of the Interstellar Escort Ship in a panel on the left-hand side of the screen.

Following the straightforward shoot em up of the first part comes the second test. Having reached the enemy starship, you find yourself in control of a DEEN Mk II — a Hostile Environment Anthrobot no less. Four parts of a bomb which have been secreted somewhere within the enemy ship must be found. Insect-like nasties are determined to get in the way and need to be avoided or zapped with your laser gun.. There are 64 screens in all so there's a great deal of exploring to do and you can move in any direction using the same keys as previously. In the weightlessness of the enemy spaceship there's an altogether different speed from the previous section. The robot floats up and down, turning this way and that in his attempt to find the four parts. In addition to the flying insects, he meets a Jaw-Head, a Bolt-Head, and a duck that sproings about in kangaroo fashion.

At the end of the two tests, an assessment is given of overall performance as well as a total score. Only by completing the tests to the examiners' satisfaction will you be accepted as an elite member of the ICUPS team. Good luck!





Flying through the maze in the second phase of ICUPS, your droid is about to collect one of the bomb components — it lurks under that dome which has to be blasted away before you get you mitts on it

CRITICISM

● **"THOR have really let me down. Their stablemates ODIN turn out really respectable games like** Heartland **and** Nodes, **now there's** ICUPS. **Of the two stages the first is a very boring shoot em up, very similar to** Spy Hunter **and the second is like a very basic arcade/adventure resembling** Sabre Wulf. **I found both these stages uninteresting to play and not the least bit addictive. The graphics on both stages are detailed and large, and this is the only part of the game that is the least bit decent. The presentation is smart, and accompanying the bright title screen is another superb multi-channel tune. Not much game though. "**

● *"The first stage is easy, after a little practice, and the second part is better, with your android wobbling around the place with really excellent inertia effects. I think, though, that the game is let down by the necessity to play past the scrolling section to get onto the maze part. The blast em up bit is a little boring and, although looking very good, during play doesn't quite move as well as it should do. Overall,* ICUPS *is not a bad game at all, but I really do expect something with more addictiveness and playability from a company associated with such classics as* Nodes of Yesod *and* Robin o' the Wood. *"*

● " At long last *ICUPS* is here and what a let down it is too. All in all, it isn't a bad game but it just isn't as original as it could have been. The first bit plays quite quickly but is very difficult to get through. The second part looks and plays a lot like the *Yesod* games although your character's jet pack and its realistic inertia adds a novel touch. Graphically *ICUPS* is excellent on all counts: the backgrounds are well detailed, the characters are very nicely animated and there is plenty of attribute free colour. The sound is also first-class, with a great tune and some admirable spot effects. This game lacks a little in addictive qualities and playability, otherwise it is well worth its relatively high price tag. "

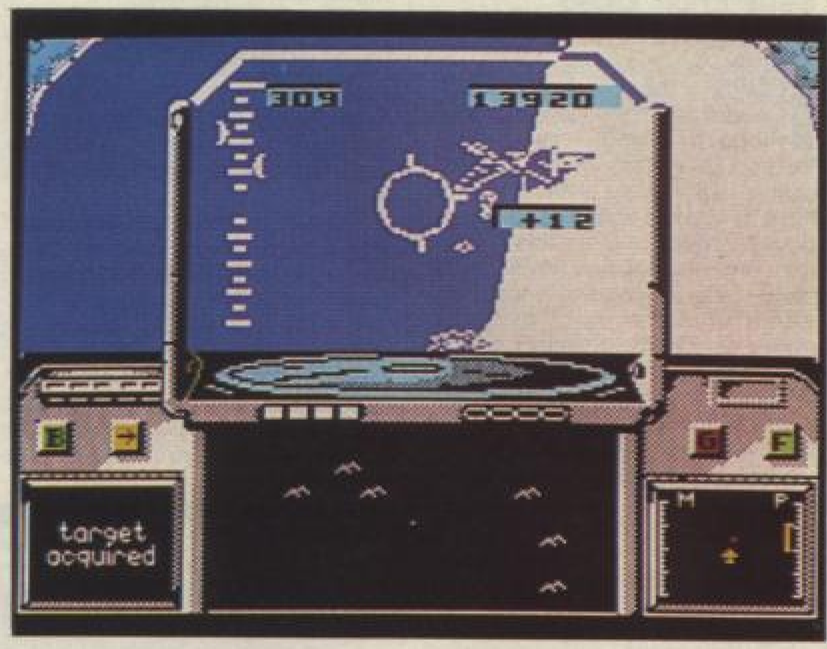
COMMENTS

Control keys: top row fire, second row thrust/accelerate, third row decelerate, alternate bottom row left/right
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fast and responsive
Use of colour: very good, with limited amounts of clashes
Graphics: nice sprites, and good scrolling
Sound: ace tune on the title screen, with spot effects during the game
Skill levels: one
Screens: three areas in the first part of the game, with 64 in the second section
General rating: A good game, but a disappointment coming from such a well established stable as THOR and ODIN

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	82%
Playability	73%
Getting started	80%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	74%
Overall	**74%**

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

Above the clouds in hot pursuit of an enemy fighter. The message screen at the bottom left of the cockpit announces the fact that your missiles are locked on to the target



Producer: Mirrorsoft
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Rod Hyde**

S*trike Force Harrier* is a flight simulator set in a Harrier Jump Jet along with a full battlefield mock up. There's strategic planning to be coped with as well as competent control of your aircraft. And of course this only comes with practice.

Your mission is to destroy the enemy HQ and set up your own ground sites at the same time. To make things a mite harder, enemy tanks and aircraft are gunning hard for you. Tanks must be destroyed before you can set up the site. Once a site has been established the tanks start to threaten your new won ground and so on . . .

After loading, you are presented with a menu of options. To begin with it is probably advisable to watch the Demo mode and then select a practice option until you get the feel of things. Once competent at handling the craft it's on to Combat duty and that's when things really start to hot up. As you can imagine, handling a Harrier requires a lot of controls. A joystick or the keyboard can be used, but even with a joystick, keys are needed too. The game comes with a 27-page booklet packed with instructions and flight movements. Although a daunting prospect it's a good idea to have a quick read through or else you'll find that your missions are curtailed rather quickly.

Strike Force Harrier can be played on two levels. It can be a shoot em up on one level, but for people really into flight simulators, it can be played as a mock up of a real battle with strategic objectives. For the committed games player the instruction booklet is essential to get a full grasp of what's going on.

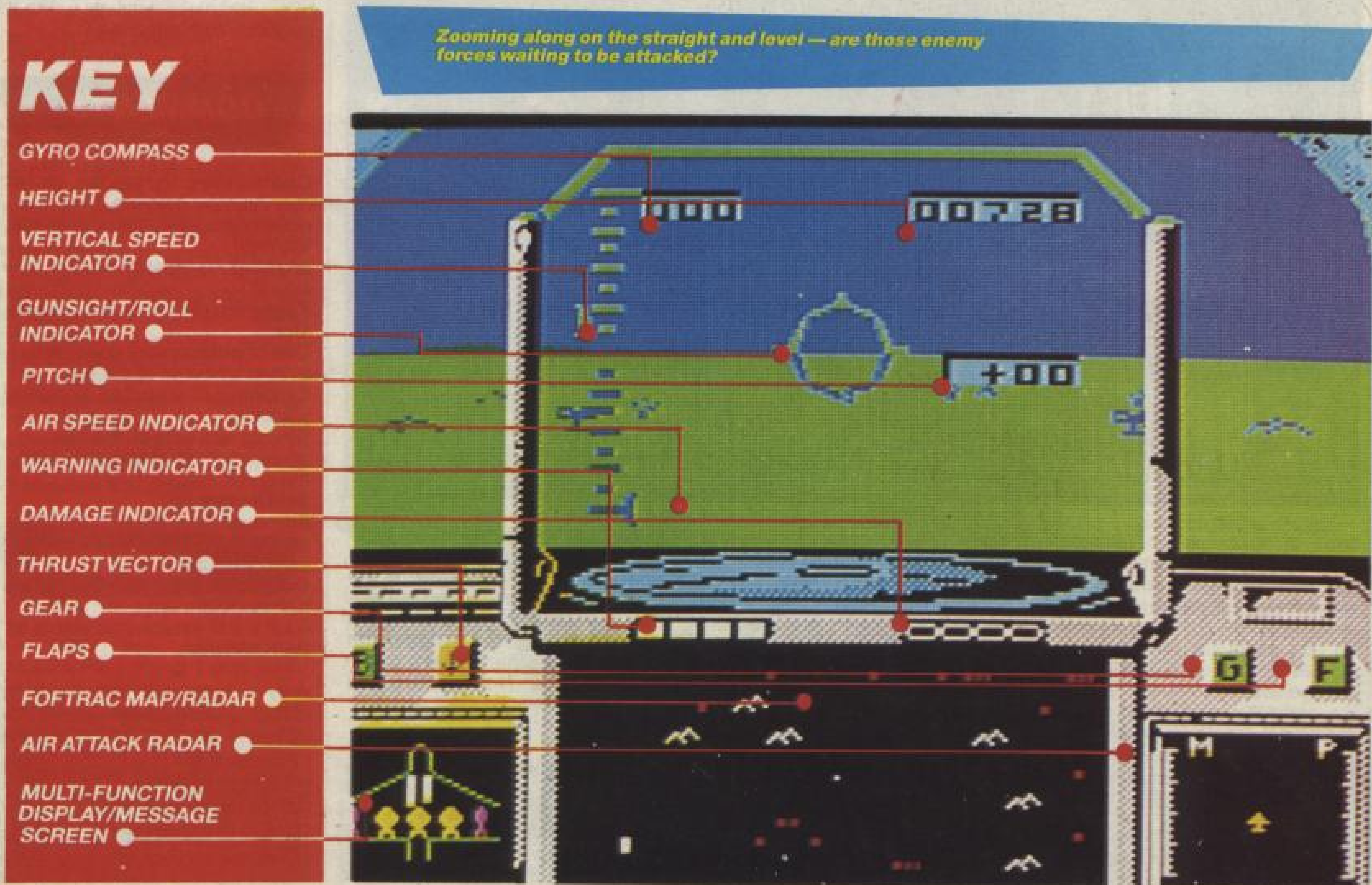
Overlaid on the cockpit view is the Head Up Display. This shows your vertical speed indicator, air speed indicator, the gyro (reveals your direction of travel), height and your pitch above or below the horizon. The HUD can also display additional information when the relevant key is pressed.

The Harrier carries an impressive inventory of weapons. You have two Sidewinder air-to-air missiles with a five mile range that automatically home in on a target selected by a sight on screen. Three 1,000lb bombs and 250 rounds of cannon shell with a five mile range are also on board. The cannon is a bit tricky to fire correctly because (low technology stuff this) you need to be pointing more or less directly at your target — should this be a tank, then obviously you're diving straight for the hard ground . . .

The air attack radar indicates the position of enemy aircraft within a radius of five miles. The Friend or Foe tracking radar situated at the bottom of the screen indicates enemy aircraft positions, mountain peaks and your own moving track so you can tell whether you are closing with or fleeing from the enemy. Tanks and ammunition sites are also shown.

Three types of take off are relevant to the various ground conditions. If the airstrip is prepared, then a conventional take off is sufficient. From unprepared ground a short take off is necessary at an angle of 45 degrees. The Harrier, however, really comes into its own when there is no take off space since it can lift off vertically. A hovering mode is also possible

Zooming along on the straight and level — are those enemy forces waiting to be attacked?



and there are three types of landing as well (conventional, short and vertical).

Three levels of combat difficulty are provided: Pilot, Commander and Ace which make different demands on the skill of the pilot. It's up to you to master the controls and prove your abilities . . .

CRITICISM

● **" Flight simulators aren't the most immediately playable games on the market, I can tell you, but** Strike Force Harrier **is comparatively easy to play. The graphics are jerky, a feature all too obvious in most games of the genre, but MIRRORSOFT have done a fair job of making an enjoyable game in a field where there have been too many duff efforts. Though by no means the best on the Spectrum,** Strike Force Harrier **is quite reasonable. As a flight sim, this is pretty good. "**

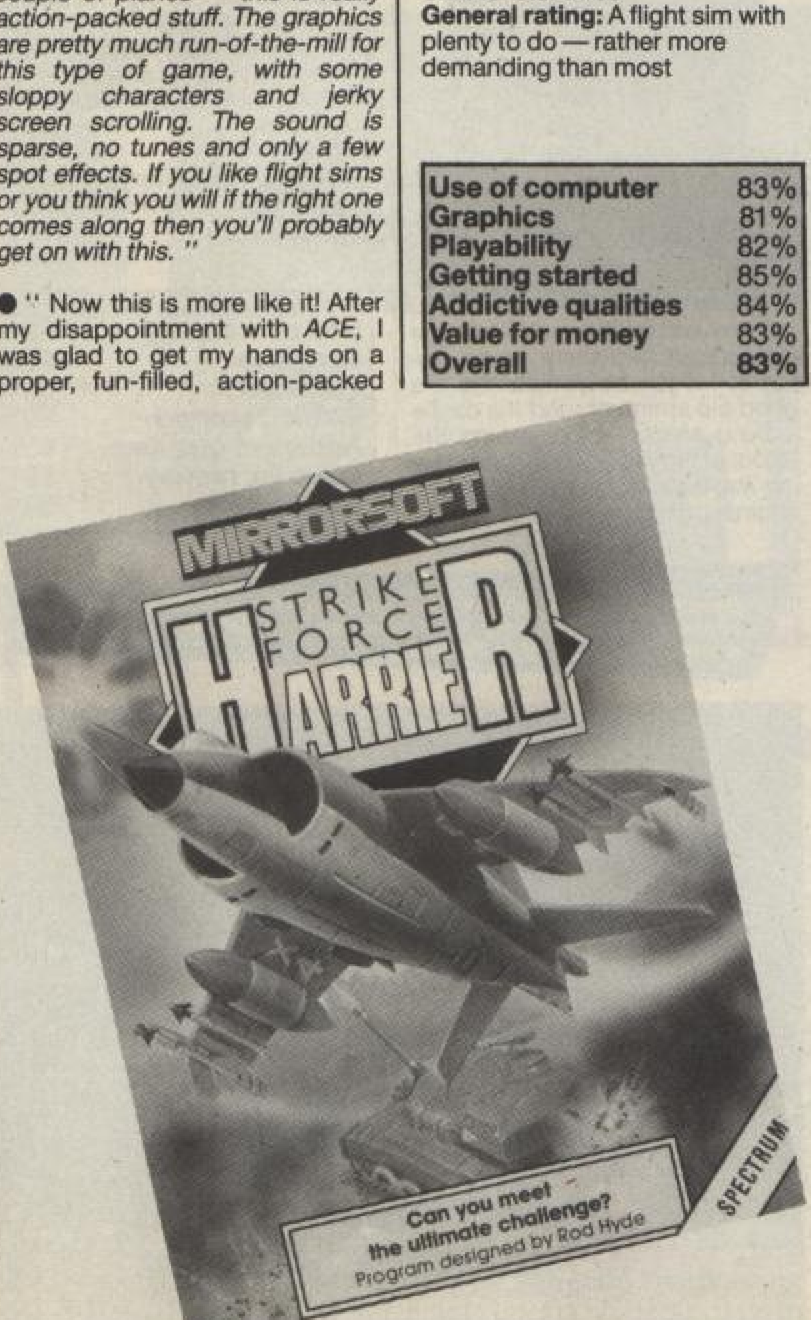
● *" What yet another Flight simulator? That makes two in two months.* Strike Force Harrier *is not nearly as boring as many other flight sims I have played recently. There are loads of nasties to shoot down so it isn't just a case of learn how to fly and then shoot down a couple of planes — this is really action-packed stuff. The graphics are pretty much run-of-the-mill for this type of game, with some sloppy characters and jerky screen scrolling. The sound is sparse, no tunes and only a few spot effects. If you like flight sims or you think you will if the right one comes along then you'll probably get on with this. "*

● " Now this is more like it! After my disappointment with *ACE*, I was glad to get my hands on a proper, fun-filled, action-packed flight simulator. *Strike Force Harrier* has all the makings of the best fight simulator on the Spectrum — even as good as *Spitfire 40*, another superb flight sim from MIRRORSOFT. A superb manual is included in the package containing simple, easy to read instructions with neat diagrams to explain all the possible movements you can use for avoiding missiles, attacking HQ and so on. The manual is an essential read, but can be skimmed over if you're very eager. The graphics are excellent and add to the realism. The plane itself if very fast reacting and behaves as you would expect a Harrier to behave — you even get your wings ripped off if you descend too fast. *Strike Force Harrier* is as near as most of us will get to flying a combat plane — and it's a mighty bit cheaper and safer! "

COMMENTS

Control keys: almost every key on the keyboard used!
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: straightforward but effective
Graphics: jerky scrolling, but otherwise fast and realistic
Sound: average
Skill levels: three
General rating: A flight sim with plenty to do — rather more demanding than most

Use of computer	83%
Graphics	81%
Playability	82%
Getting started	85%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	83%
Overall	**83%**



TRAPDOOR

Producer: Piranha
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Don Priestley**

It's no fun being a minion — all that scampering around after a tireless master, very tedious. Poor old Berk the chef! Shut away in the bowels of a damp and gloomy castle, his sole vocation in life is to wait on his hungry master's every whim.

The castle is very messy as well as being very damp and cold. With only Berk to tidy things up and lots of minor minions scampering around untidying it, the place soon becomes very disorganised. Berk must move around the rooms in the castle collecting the objects he needs to feed the boss. He can move left and right and in and out of the screen — much as the central character in Don Priestley's previous games, *Popeye* and *Benny Hill's Madcap Chase* moved around the playing area.

Berk's master is a very impatient sort of fellow. At the bottom of the screen an Angry Meter monitors Thing's mood — when the hungry one gets really furious on account of the delay, it cancels the order and demands something else.

A large trapdoor nestles in the start location, and all sorts of nasty beasties lurk in the dank region below it. Berk needs a specific trapdoor monster to complete each task. Apart from the useful objects and creatures, there are a lot of pests beneath the trapdoor. . . . Every time Berk opens the portal he has no way of telling what might leap out — it's just a question of opening the hatch quickly and slamming it shut pronto if an undesirable beastie shoots out. Ghosts say Boo and startle Berk so much that he jumps to another room in the castle — they only go away if they're fed. Watch out for the flame thrower monster because he's very unkind to our Minion.

Cooking utensils and useful objects are scattered around the castle. Most are cunningly hidden inside other objects and Berk must pick things up and tilt them to get at hidden items. By using his small blue brain he must use objects and trapdoor monsters to produce the correct meal for Thing.

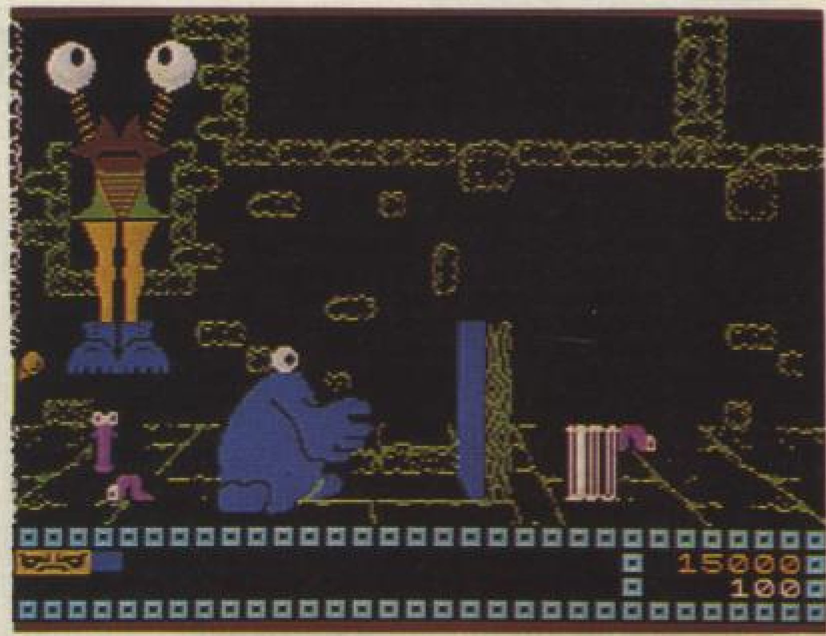
If Berk loses a vital object by dropping it down the trapdoor then his task cannot be completed, and he has to commit suicide by throwing himself into the void below the trapdoor . . .

Apart from the foes in them thar vaults, Berk does have some friends. Boni the skull is quite intelligent for a bodyless bag of bones. If Berk picks him up he usually says something useful and gives Berk a clue, but each bit of advice costs points. Drutt is a yellow spider that spends its time eating worms and generally being a pest. Other monsters and creatures wriggle and squirm their way around the castle, and some of them are ingredients!

At the end of the week, if Berk has correctly completed all his chores then he gets paid. Unfortunately, Thing is not a very trusting soul, and Berk's wages are sent down in a fortified safe. If Berk wants to get at the money and have a wild night on the town with other Berks, then he must find out how to get inside the safe and claim his loot.

Berk starts out life in the castle as a trainee minion. If you choose the Superberk option them all manner of nasties leap out and make life incredibly miserable.

There's just no pleasing some Grumpy Things.



Pink worms abound as a giant monster bounds around, frightening poor old minion Berk

CRITICISM

● **"With the immense, bright, colourful characters,** Trapdoor **is one of those games that grabs you immediately. Even though the game gets a lil' bit monotonous after a few long sessions, you can always sit back and admire the terrific animation and amazing lack of colour clash. Most of the problems are relatively easy, providing you don't mistake any objects for others. This can, and often does happen, and when it does, is very frustrating. Basically,** Trapdoor **is a very playable and addictive excellent game, with great graphics and fantastic colour."**

● *"To begin with, I must say that* Trapdoor *is not the game for serious people! The whole look of the game is extremely colourful, and Berk's animation is excellent and smooth. The game is very simple in its layout, but very well drawn with lots of other squiggly colourful characters to follow you around and get in the way. The game seemed to me to be aimed at the same market as the TV series due to be broadcast this Autumn — young. It's a pity really, as the idea of the game is very good but doesn't involve any in depth thinking. I can't really say that I went wild over* Trapdoor*, but the game is very smart in all aspects, including a cute tune. A game for the young and young at heart."*

● "What a great game *Trapdoor* is! It is based on a very original idea and presented in an entertaining way, which makes it very playable and quite compelling. The graphics are astoundingly large and well defined: the characters move around agreeably and the backgrounds are detailed. The sound is on a par with the graphics — there are only a few spot effects during the game but the tune on the title screen is fantastic. The game at first is very easy . . . on the learner Berk level there are no nasties to kill you so you can have a good old stomp around the castle looking around and learning the layout of the rooms. I enjoyed playing *Trapdoor* as it is a playable and original game."

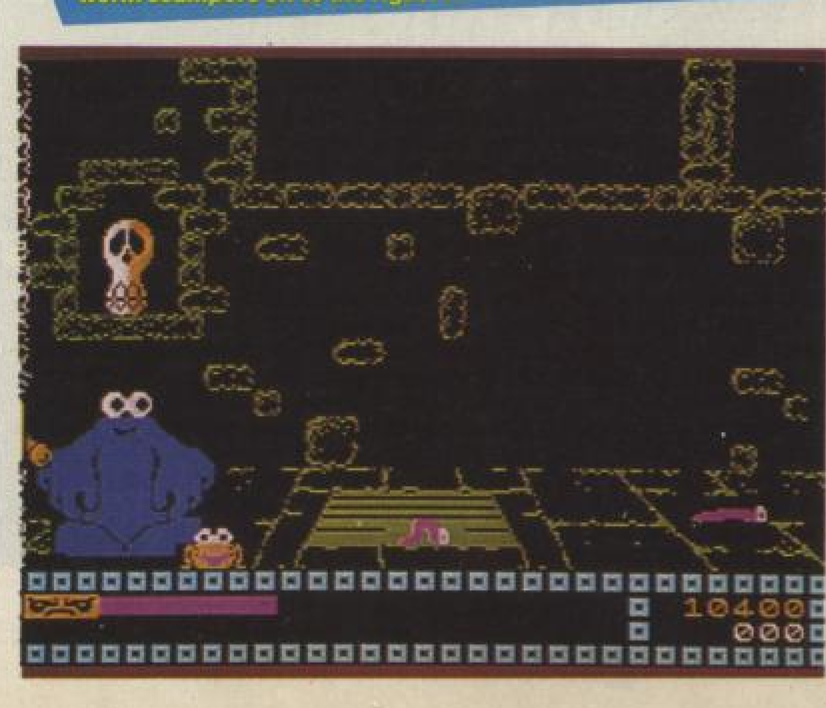


COMMENTS

Control keys: definable: left, right, forward, back, drop, pick up, tip
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: good, responsive
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: superb big characters, and great animation
Sound: very good title tune, with some nice in game effects
Skill levels: two: learner berk and super berk
Screens: 6
General rating: A very neat and original game with endearing graphics

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	91%
Playability	88%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	85%
Value for money	86%
Overall	88%

Berk and the little yellow nuisance, Drutt the spider, are in the room with the trapdoor. Boni looks on inscrutably as a pink worm scampers off to the right . . .



RESCUE ON FRACTALUS

Producer: Activision
Retail Price: **£7.99**
Author: **Lucasfilm games**

Air Pilots are suddenly in demand and they're badly needed on Fractalus, a remote planet in the Kalamar system. Apparently the Jaggies, Kalamar's space adversaries, are using Fractalus as a stronghold. The System's highly trained Space Pilots just can't cope with it. What's worse some of them are stranded on this highly inhospitable planet. It's your job to rescue them!

This is not as easy as it sounds. For one thing, the horrid jaggies have built a fairly sophisticated and potentially lethal defence system which may seriously zap you — so watch out! The planet also has a very fast rotation rate — one day lasts nine minutes — and an atmosphere thick with cyanitric acid! Fortunately, Valkyrie fighter ships are at your disposal with their computerized instrument panel. With these you have a chance of saving the stranded Pilots.

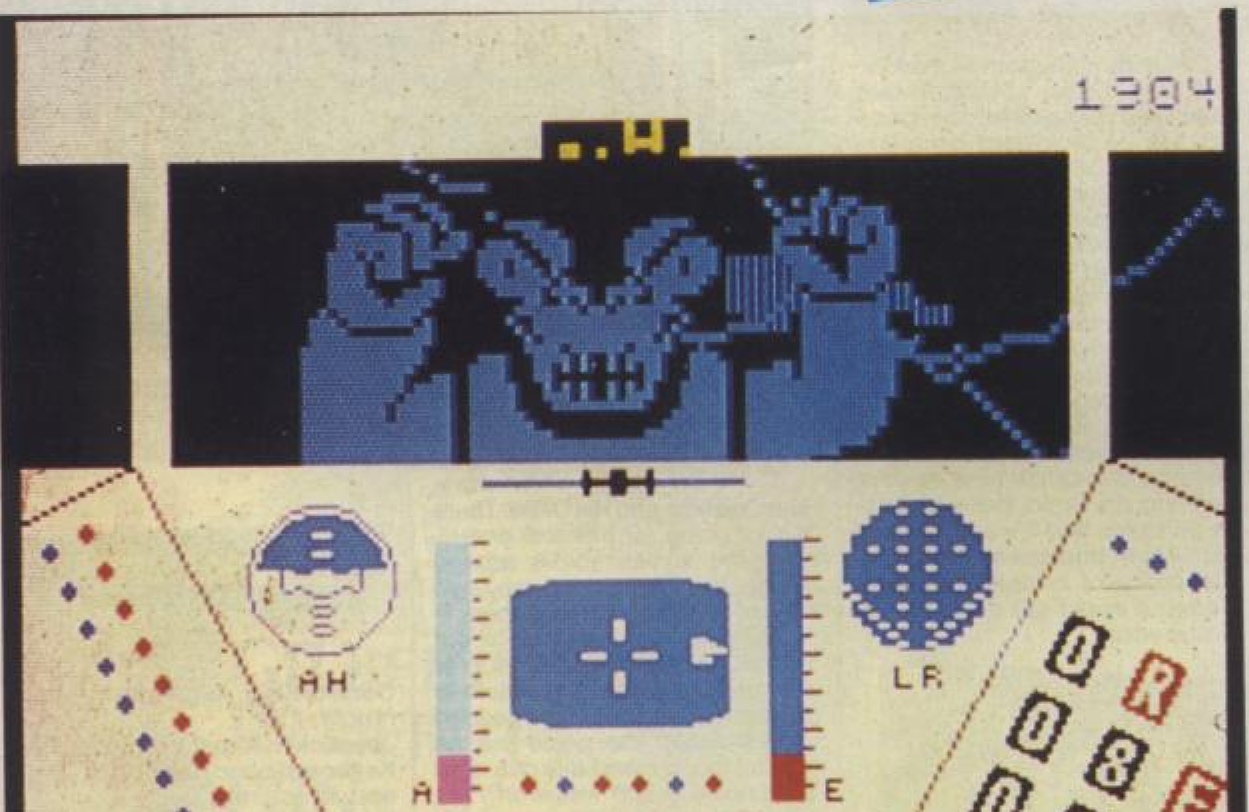
Descending from the flashing multi-coloured tunnel of the Mother Ship you enter the yellow fog of Fractalus. From your window a panorama of craggy mountains stretch before you. Having fought a way through the jaggie defence system, the next task is to locate the Space Pilots scattered on the planet's surface. Using the instrument panel it is possible to find each one as they wait patiently in their wrecked spaceships for your arrival. On landing, you must turn your engine systems off and let the pilot in by opening the air-lock . . . then it's on to the next one! How you land and take off is also very important as it is quite easy to destroy one of the pilots by accident. Occasionally, aliens guised as pilots attempt to board your ship so beware. Once all the pilots have been picked up, you must return them, safe and sound to the Mother Ship.

The more notice taken of the instrument panel, the more successful your mission will be. Amongst other things, this displays thrust level, altitude, energy level, radar facilities, shield strength, and the number of enemies destroyed and pilots rescued. The long range scanner is vital as this registers a stranded pilot's emergency signal by an intermittent beep. A V shape at the base of the scanner indicates the view from your window — when you get near to a pilot the scanner begins to beep. Quite frequently, the Mother Ship avails herself should your need an energy boost. Flashing text in the top left-hand corner of the screen indicates when Mommy is in the vicinity. A row of lights in the bottom centre of the instrument panel go out when an enemy gun emplacement locks onto your ship. Immediately after, one by one, they come on again. When all six are lit up the enemy gun emplacements will fire and only evasive manouevering of the ship can break their hold.

Points are awarded for various things. Every second of flight, for example, earns you one point, whilst every pilot returned to the Mother Ship earns five hundred. Destroying gun emplacements, alien saucers and just picking up a pilot all earn extra points, and extra points are given for each level completed.

The lives of the Pilots rest in your hands. Only by taking confident control of the Valkyrie and steering it in the right direction will this be possible. The Jaggies are getting stronger everyday and Fighter Pilots are precious. Can you ensure the future survival of the Kalamar System.

No, it's not a stranded pilot beating on your cockpit window . . it's a nasty alien!



CRITICISM

● **"It seems that Lucasfilm have made** Rescue on Fractalus**as good as possible on the Spectrum, but I don't think the game is really suited to the machine. The graphics are quite reasonable, but the mist effect isn't all that good because mountains start appearing from nowhere, and that messes up a lot of the effect. Overall, the game is averagely playable and addictive, but the graphics, which I think were one of the distinguishing features of the original, are a let down — but that's not the fault of the programmers. I can't say** Rescue on Fractalus **is one of the games I'd buy, but other people might like it."**

● *"The Spectrum version of this game is as good as can be expected and very easy to get into. The graphics are all animated relatively quickly considering the amount of screen that is moving about and the sound exists but doesn't excel. I found the game good fun to play at first but very hard to do anything spectacular apart from shooting everything that appeared, but persistence opened up what is a very deep and involving game.* Rescue on Fractalus *has all the appeal of Zzoom in the way that you can go around shooting all your mateys; but if you want to play seriously, a lot can be had out of the game."*

● "*Rescue on Fractalus* at first sight looks extremely ugly as there is a great deal of unslightly garish colour floating around the screen, so you could be forgiven for turning a blind eye to this one. After getting over my initial shock I really began to get into *Rescue*, in fact I am a little reluctant to give up playing . . . although the surface of Fractalus scrolls badly and the characters are blocky. The sound is very poor, with only a couple of spot effects during the whole game. Generally this isn't a bad game once you get over the colour problems."

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors keys, with 0 or space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: a bit difficult to get used to
Use of colour: lots used, bordering on the garish at times
Graphics: very jerky, but good fractal technique
Sound: nice title tune, with spot effects in the game
Skill levels: 16
Screens: scrolling cockpit view over a large landscape
General rating: A good game, but one that's perhaps not best suited to the Spectrum

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	72%
Playability	77%
Getting started	76%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	74%
Overall	75%

Reviews

LAP OF THE GODS

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Clive Brooker**

Caught in a comet's vortex, millions of light years from home, you are understandably not all that happy. After all, there isn't much to do in a vortex is there? And to make things worse, you are powerless to do anything about it. As desperation begins to set in, the all powerful gods of Zzarn who rule the universe, reveal that they can in fact release you from your current predicament, but they want something in return.

Buried from sight are the crystals of Zzarn. These are quite essential to the gods. So essential, in fact, that the gods are prepared to strike up an unusual bargain with you. In return for finding the crystals of Zzarn the gods will transport you into the future and back to your proper time zone and throw in your freedom as well. This might all sound fine and dandy, but you are sadly poorly equipped to go around digging up lost crystals. Before you can begin to root around in the dirt some digging tools must be acquired. Once again the gods can help you out, but only if you give them something else . . . Scattered around the chambers are various effigies. These must be collected and placed in the tile-lined rooms for safety. In return for finding these objects you will be furnished with excavating tools — including slab acid for eating away the tunnel walls — and special magical powers.

As usual, there is a snag. The chambers are inhabited by hoards of very mischievous demi-devils who would like nothing more than to curtail your mission in its infant stages. Repeated encounters with these irritating nasties results in a loss of your essential energy. Each clash reduces energy, and death follows when energy levels get too low. The devils also suffer from an acute case of Kleptomania. If your droid manages to pick up an effigy and is en route to depositing it in the tiled chamber, the demons hound in on you. After three hassles, the devils gain possession of the effigy and you are left to face the wrath of the gods. The gods, angry at your ineptness, remove any magical powers bestowed on you and you have to win them back in order to continue the game. Points are scored for every effigy deposited in the tiled chamber and the current score is displayed at the top of the screen along with the number of energy points you have left.

You move around the chambers on a little cushion of air. Upward movement is available by using jet propulsion. Gravity takes over when the 'up' key isn't being pressed and you float gracefully down towards the ground. Teleporters enable you to move from one chamber to another but can only be used if you are carrying an effigy. While holding the ornament the 'activate teleport' option is added to the menu. Pressing fire to get to the menu, and fire again takes you where you want to go and also drops the effigy. The menu options reveal the teleporter routes available.

Returning to your own space and time is only possible once all the effigies in each chamber have been deposited in the correct place and all the crystals have been dug up and given to the gods of Zzarn. That's if the devils don't get to you first . . .

CRITICISM

● **"At last, a sequel to** One Man and His Droid. **MASTERTRONIC seem to have got all the good bits out of** Droid **and compiled them into a very smart and addictive game. The graphics are extremely colourful and detailed. None of the characters are animated within themselves, only up, down, left or right which tends to make the characters look very boring. The inlay contains the usual MASTERTRONIC stuff with good screen pictures which help with 'impulse buying' in the shop. The game is basically on the same lines as** One Man and His Droid, **but with better graphics and it's a lot harder. I am fairly impressed with this odd piece of budget software, though it could get a bit boring after a while."**



● *"This is certainly a very good piece of budget software. I reckon it is much easier to follow and therefore much more playable* than One Man and His Droid. *There is a lot going for this one graphically: the screen scrolls around nicely, the characters are well drawn and animated and there is plenty of colour splashed about the place with a minimal amount of attribute problems. The sound is also pretty good, with many sound effects during the game but no tunes. I recommend this one, as it is compelling and well worth the two quid that* MASTERTRONIC *are asking for it."*

● "Another MASTERTRONIC game. Another disappointment? No, surprise, surprise. *Lap of the Gods* is quite a reasonable game. A nice demo appears, and though the scenario is a little dubious, the game is fun to play and, to an extent, addictive enough to justify an outlay of £1.99. From some of their recent releases, MASTERTRONIC have demonstrated their ability to produce games of a reasonable quality, but they always seem to mess up a run of quality games with an extremely dire one every so often, which is a pity. This one isn't one to fall into the latter category though, so nip on down to the ol' software shop, and check it out."



Now you've collected an effigy, it's off to that tiled chamber to make a deposit in the gods' goodwill bank and gain some extra powers



In the tiled chamber, where the effigies need to be stashed to please the gods. Note the pull-down option menu . . .

COMMENTS

Control keys: A up, Z down, M left, N right, 1 fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive, and easy to control
Use of colour: very bright, colourful, and attractive
Graphics: slightly jerky scrolling, but nice animation, and pleasant characters
Sound: not extensive. Limited, mainly to clicks and buzzes
Skill levels: one
Screens: 16 caverns
General rating: A very good game, especially for the low price

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	83%
Playability	80%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	81%
Value for money	87%
Overall	80%

GREMLIN

WHATEVER WE DO..... .....WE DO IT BETTER!

Footballer of the Year

The game to answer every boyhood dream – the chance to make it to the very top of football stardom. Starting on your path to glory as a 17 year old apprentice with a Fourth Division team and only £500 and 10 goal scoring cards in your pockets, the footballing world is at your feet. Adopt the identity of a professional footballer and develop a career through the ups and downs of match days, transfer deals and injuries etc. Display your talents in Football League, E.U.F.A., F.A. and Milk Cup games and then if you're good enough the ultimate accolade of your sport, the Footballer of the Year Award.



Future Knight & Trailblazer are not available on BBC/Electron.

C16 + 4
£6.95

MSX Spectrum 48K
£7.95

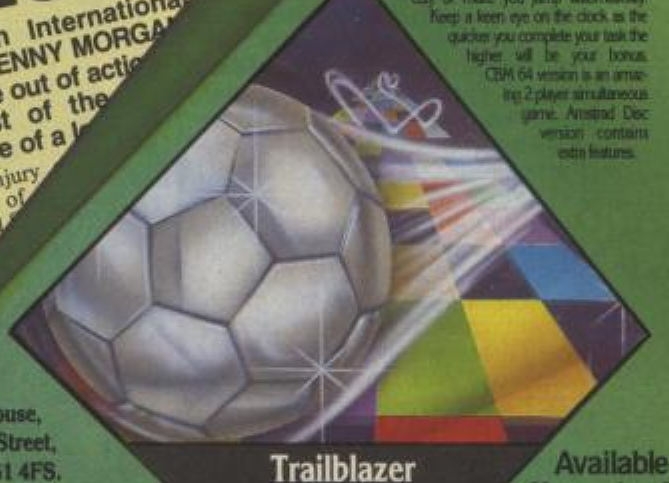
Amstrad, BBC/Electron
Atari, CBM 64/128
£9.95

Disk
£14.95

Future Knight
Rise Sir Randolph to take up the challenge of death that has befallen the fair maid Amelia, held in the evil clutches of Spebott the Terrible. Acting upon an inter-dimensional distress signal from the galactic cruiser SS Rustbucket, don your Omnibott Mark II attack suit and venture forth in pursuit of your beloved's captors. Defend yourself nobly against the Berzerka Security droids. Fight your way through 20 gruelling levels onto the planet's surface into Spebott's castle where the fate of Amelia lies with the outcome of your mortal combat with the awesome Henchodroid. Is there any gallantry and bravery left in this modern day universe?

Trailblazer
Thunder into the unknown at a breakneck speed, pushing your reflexes to their limits in this definitely exhilarating journey that's not one for the fainthearted. Roll left, roll right avoiding the endless chasms of doom that lay in and around the squares of mystery. Squares that will sometimes slow your progress, on occasion with fatal consequences and sometimes speed up unexpectedly or make you jump automatically. Keep a keen eye on the clock as the quicker you complete your task the higher will be your bonus. CBM 64 version is an amazing 2 player simultaneous game. Amstrad Disc version contains extra features.





Available November! **Future Knight**

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: (0742) 753423

Trailblazer Available November!

UNIVERSAL HERO

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Xcel**

Captain Burt has only 7 seconds in which to save the world. How will he do it? Slowly the captain swivels his chair around and stares at you coolly. 'Don't worry,' he says in a macho voice, 'I have a plan . . .'

Poor old Burt is in a right pickle. A space freighter is out of control and determined to blow up. This in itself is quite an alarming prospect, but to add to the dilemma, if the freighter does go **K A P O W** then poor old Captain Burt will be stranded on a horrid asteroid and will never get back to Mother Earth. Not ever.

What a terrible position to be in!

But there's more. The space freighter is up in space and Burt is stuck on the asteroid. His only means of transport is a rather decrepit shuttle which just so happens to be broken. Contending with a pressing time limit, Burt must repair the shuttle, zoom off to a neighbouring planet, collect the spare parts for the ailing freighter and mend same before it explodes. Gasp! And all in seven seconds. As we said before, how will he do it?

The spare parts to mend the shuttle are scattered all over the asteroid and must be collected in order to get the shuttle back on the road, to mix a metaphor. This should be an easy task but most of the vital pieces of the shuttle are possessively guarded by various alien horrors and contact with them results in Burt's valuable air supply being sapped away. At the start there are four air bottles, but these are used up pretty quickly as he hurtles around the space rock. However, to make sure Burt has something useful to inhale, new air bottles can be picked up along the way. Oxygen status is displayed at the top of the main screen. When the chart reaches the red section on the fourth bottle you know it's going to be curtains for Burt very shortly.

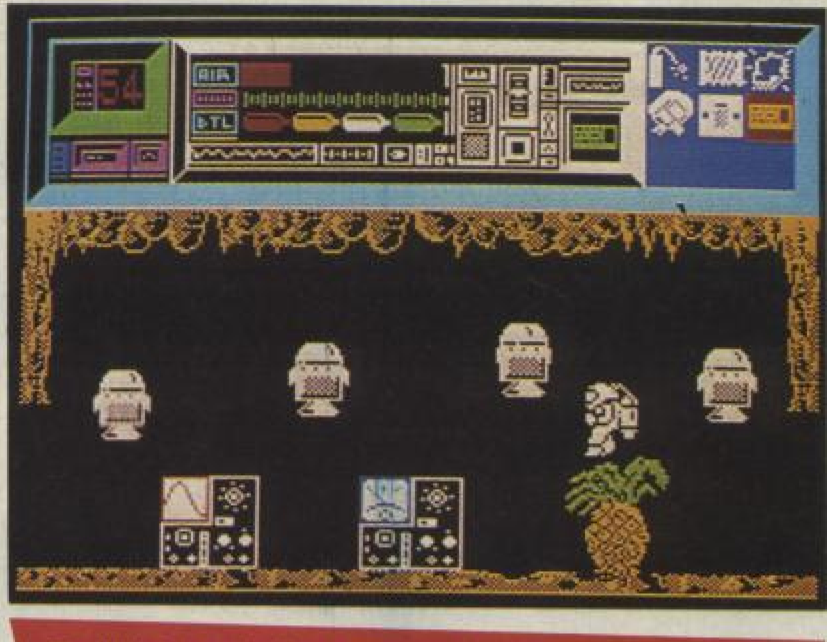
Not all the objects on the asteroid are helpful and often you don't know this until they are safely tucked up in Burt's space suit pockets. Some are lethal such as the lump of Plutonium; some simply uncomfortable like the rough glass. Objects are picked up and stored by using the defined cursor keys and with nine pockets nine objects can be carried at one time. Objects can also be dropped and used when required and to know what's carried, a keypress reveals the Inventory.

To move around, Burt is equipped with a jet pack that can propel him to great heights or carry him over large chasms. The asteroid consists of a series of underground caverns, as well as the knobbly surface which hides many surprises and many dangers. Watch Captain Burt as he battles to save the world (and himself of course!) in all of seven seconds. Gee, what a hero!

CRITICISM

● " **I was pleasantly surprised with** Universal Hero. **I found it very easy to get into and exciting to play. All the characters are extremely well detailed, with a great drawing of a Spectrum Plus in the Computer Room. The game revolves around putting items together and then using them to get other items, and is consequently very addictive, involving as it does the need for a quick mind as well as accurate moving. The 'feel' of the way that Burt moves around is excellent, but rather annoying when you actually bounce off ceilings and do not hover properly.** Universal Hero **is surprisingly smooth in its movement and is completely flicker free. A mass of** Spellbound **problems in a very complex game. Well worth the meagre two quid.** "

● *"* Molecule Man *was a very good game, excellent at the price. Looking at* Universal Hero, *I begin to ask myself, have* MASTERTRONIC *turned over a new leaf? This game is good, not mega hyper ultra brill, but good, and excellent value for money. The puzzles are maybe a little simple, but the game plays well, and has addictiveness that more than justifies its meagre price. This is well worth buying, even if only because you won't have to save up for it. "*



Our little jet-packed hero negotiates a subterranean roomful of mobile nasties on his way to save a doomed space freighter



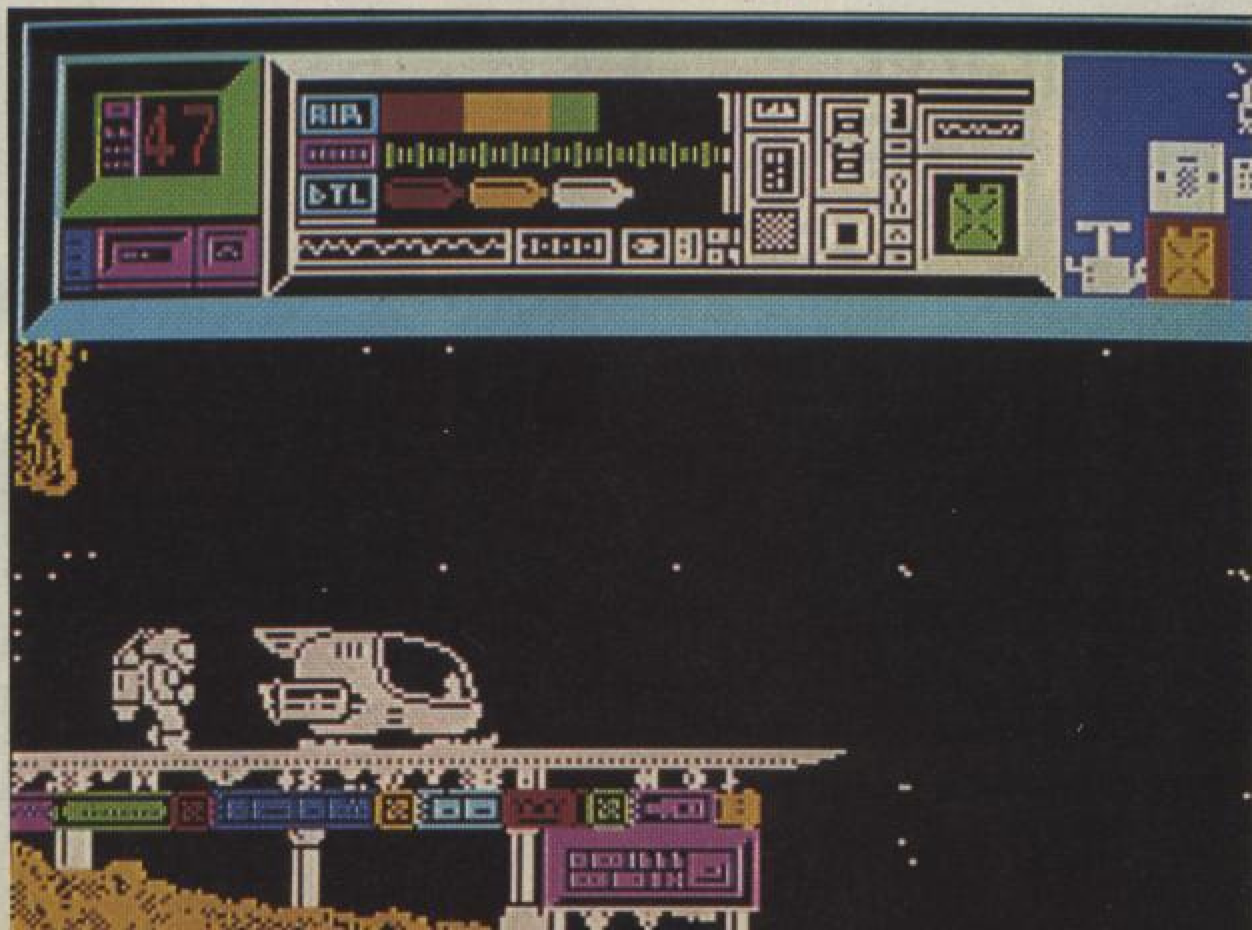
● " It's been a long time since I've seen cheap software as fun to play and as compelling as this. It plays in a similar way to many other problem solving games although the problems, initially simple, get very hard towards the end. Graphically this one rates quite highly as the backgrounds are very nicely detailed and the large and porky characters whizz around well. Colour, too, is used to maximum effect without any attribute clash. The sound would have been greatly improved if there was a tune on the title screen, but there are some spot effects which are reasonable. *Universal Hero* certainly offers great value for money, so I recommend it. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: great, very responsive
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: very nice characters and good backdrops
Sound: nothing revolutionary
Skill levels: one
Screens: 128
General rating: Well done MASTERTRONIC!

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	81%
Playability	84%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**83%**

Captain Burt surveys the broken shuttle craft. It must be repaired before the main mission can be attempted



DEKORATING BLUES

Producer:Alpha Omega
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **R Morrison**

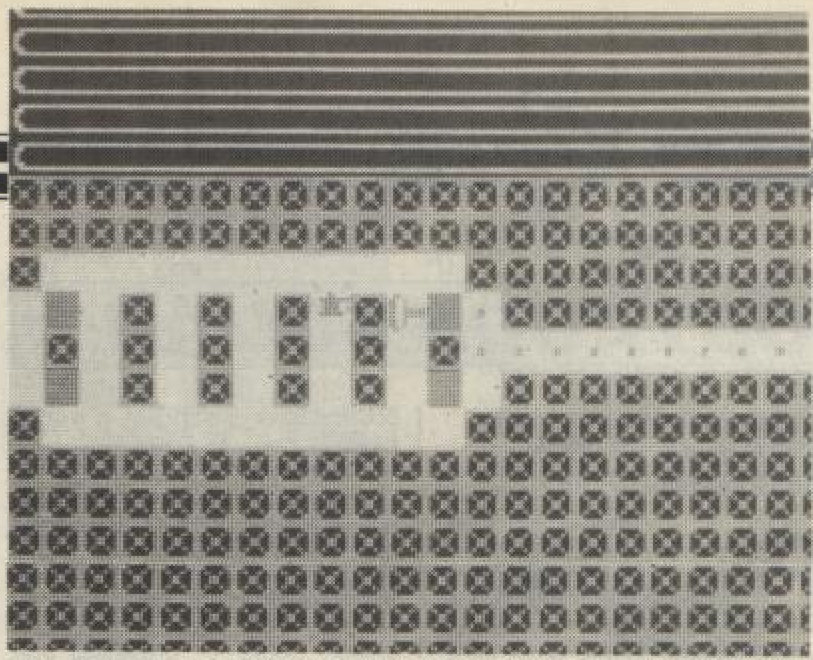
Ah got de blues baby, yeh I got dem blues, yeh, yeh, ah got de dekorating blues . . .

Decorating is the most tedious of chores. First the paste is too thin and the paper won't stick to the wall and then the paint drips all over the carpet. And have you ever tried wall-papering a ceiling? Still, if you fancy yourself as a painter and decorator, then here's an opportunity you can't refuse. What about using your talents to bring a bit of colour to an otherwise drab hotel? Start at the bottom and work your way up.

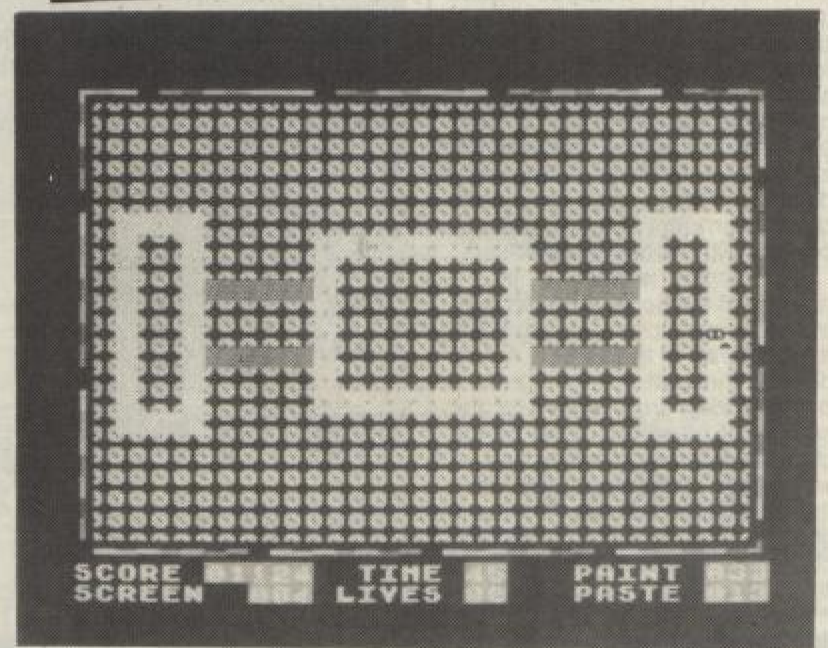
Each of the screens displays a bird's-eye-view of the hotel's network of rooms and corridors. These networks assume a variety of shapes. Some take the shape of inanimate objects — a joystick, for example. Other networks take the form of animals (the Mutant Ram, for example) or humans (the French Teacher), whilst others are merely abstract. The background to each of the floor networks is sumptuously ornate, indicating that this particular hotel is something of a classy joint.

The idea is to work through each floor, roller in hand, as quickly as possible. As you move through each corridor, blue dots indicate the decorated areas, so it's easy to see where you've been. Nasties are determined to undo all the work you've done, and, if possible, put you out of action once and for all. Should you bump into any of them then you find yourself decorating that heavenly mansion in the sky in shades of subtle off-white!

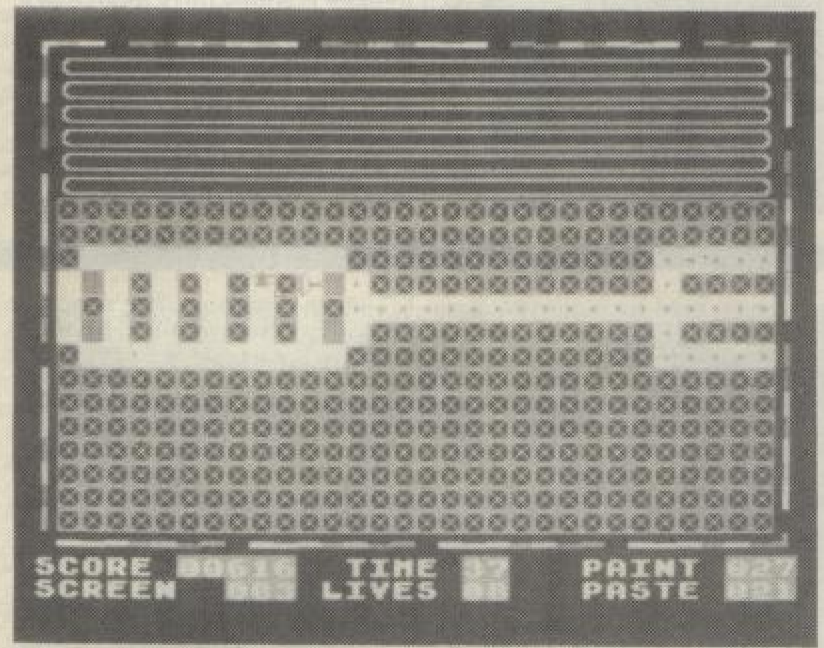
The flashing red nasty and the caterpillar nasty both move very quickly and are simply out to knobble you. One of the other nasties wants to gobble up all your blue dots, so you may find yourself having to do the work twice over. Luckily, you have a steady supply of paste which can be dropped at convenient moments. Pretty strong stuff, the paste can be used to get you out of some rather sticky situations. For one thing, when dropped in the path of an approaching nasty it slows the little blighter down. It also enables you to walk all over them should you want to change direction.



A detail from the dining room — watch out for the nasty, he moves pretty fast



You've almost completed the middle section but there's still a long way to go and even more nasties to avoid



Enter the dining room, suitably shaped like a fork. Decorate it before the descending bars crush you and you might earn a free dinner

The screen number is given in the bottom left corner, and directly beneath that, your score. Bottom centre indicates how many of your ten lives are left and above that, a clock ticks away the seconds. In the bottom right corner, the amount of paint, or number of dots you have to use is indicated and just below that, how many dollops of paste you have left.

There are plenty of screens to get through, so you'd better be a swift and nimble worker or you'll find yourself out of a job with a lot of time on your hands.

CRITICISM

● **" Mega fantastico! Or at least that's what I thought until I played the game. Argh!! One character block graphics, terrible colour and appalling sound. The game is far too easy. With ten lives, it just isn't addictive and it takes you too long to get to the place where you finished the last game. At its price, it might be worth buying for the 'scratching' speech effects, and the other nice bits it has, but I wouldn't fork out for the game itself. "**

● " Dekorating Blues *is a superbly presented game but is very basic and boring to play. The area in which the paint brush moves is very restricted and I felt that I didn't know what had to be filled in and what could be left. The screen gives you all the information you're likely to need during the game: score, level, time, paste left and so on, but this doesn't enhance the thing at all. The screens are all made up in pretty animal and castle patterns, but as a person who got quite far through the game I can safely say that nothing changes. A nicely presented program, but the game itself is very disappointing.* "

● " You may have guessed what sort of game this is by the title. I did find it strangely compelling and playable but these qualities faded out after a few goes. The programmers have obviously tried to tart this one up as there are lots of lovely effects on the title screen and at the end of each level. The game, however, isn't half as good as these, which is a shame. The graphics are generally poor, the characters are small and undetailed and the backgrounds are boring. The sound, on the other hand, is quite good — there are some nice effects during play and a couple of tunes on the title screens. On the whole, I wouldn't recommend *Dekorating Blues* as the game itself is very primitive. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: fair
Graphics: pretty but, in the end, pretty boring
Sound: some nice effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 40
General rating: Nice gloss, but becomes very monotonous after a while

Use of computer	70%
Graphics	34%
Playability	31%
Getting started	33%
Addictive qualities	33%
Value for money	40%
Overall	**38%**

Reviews

OCTAGON SQUAD

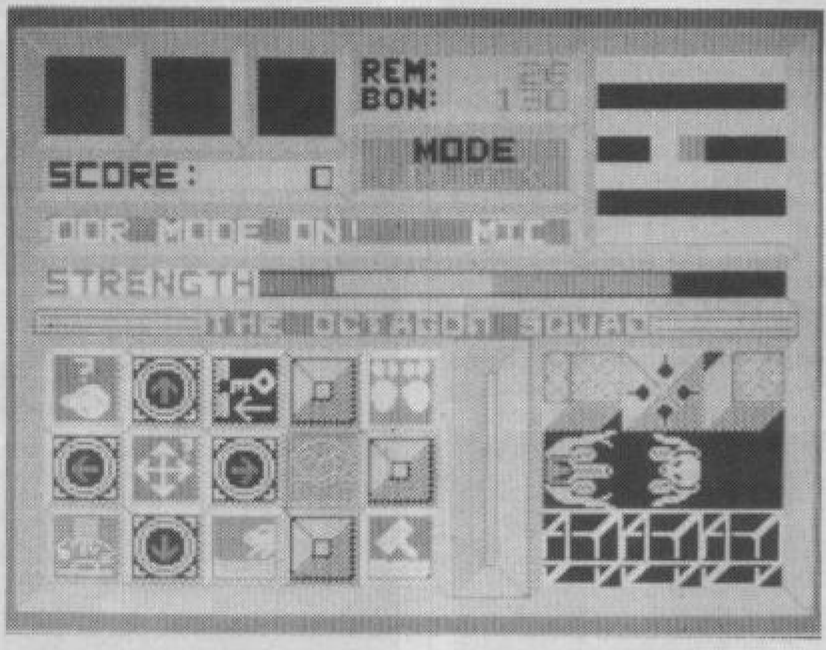


Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Geoff Foley**

Planet 54.7 has suffered an attack with deadly chemicals weapons, leaving only twenty-six survivors. They are all suffering from severe brain damage and, to make matters worse, are lost in a a reactor maze. As the Commander of Octagon Squad it's your job to rescue the survivors by beaming them out through the teleport fence. Luckily, you have at your disposal a team of Equadroids that must be used to block off maze exits and channel the zombie-like humans in the right direction. Tables can be moved to block corridors and doorways opened with the appropriate keys.

The display is split up into a number of sections. A dozen control icons occupy the bottom left hand quarter of the screen. A window at the bottom right gives a detailed view from above of the section of maze occupied by the character currently controlled. A wider view of the maze is given in the top right hand map window: a green square identifies the moving character; corridors are indicated by black areas, and walls or obstructions are shown in a light blue.

Selection of the multiple arrow icon allows you to move up, down, left and right depending on your position in the maze. Other icons allow you to pick up an object, take a drink (which counters the energy sapping chemical residue), and unlock doors — providing you have the appropriately coloured key. There are also pause and quit options. The first icon however, makes it possible to select any of the seven available Equadroids and they can be identified by name when the face icon is accessed.



A multi-coloured bar across the centre of the screen indicates a character's strength, and a variety of windows display the current mode, score, and the number of survivors still in the maze. Scrolling text messages appear on a horizonal window.

So, get your team together and get to work. Strategy and the co-ordination of the Equadroids is all important. Twenty-six people are in need of treatment and are relying on you to save them from the deadly toxic gas!

CRITICISM

● **" Oh no! After** Molecule Man **and** Universal Hero, **I got the idea that MASTERTRONIC had changed their tune, and started producing good games. Why then, do they bung out a game like** Octagon Squad**? One of the game's worst features is the traditional MASTERTRONIC instructions, or lack of them. If more had been explained about the game, then maybe it would have been more enjoyable, but as it stands, it is very hard to get into, and even harder to play well. Though original to an extent, very little about** Octagon Squad **sticks in the mind, apart from its distinct lack of playability and addictivity. Even for £1.99,** Octagon Squad **is**

BUCCANEER

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Insight (Peter Gough)**

Alien forces are seeking to take control of Earth and have invaded in great numbers. It's one fighter plane against a myriad of alien craft . . . a pilot's lot is not a happy one. Wave after wave of nasties come towards the lone plane, determined to zap you out of the sky. Survival depends on swift reactions and deadly aim.

The screen scrolls from right to left, your fighter plane staying near the left hand edge of the screen so that there's a clear view of the alien forces and time to try and dodge their lethal missiles. The action takes place over a broad blue river — on the far bank the scenery changes from mountains to cities to forests and back to mountains again.

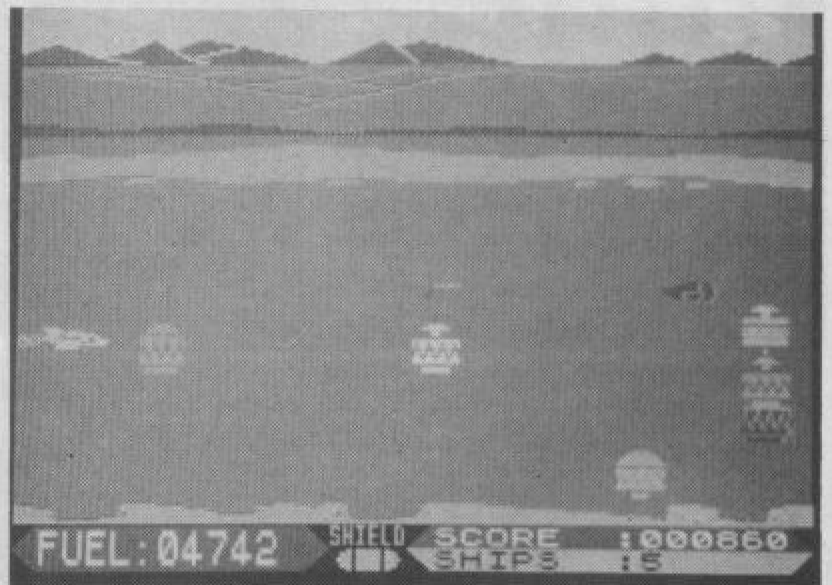
The nasties come in a variety of forms and colours and dance about as they approach. Not only must their missiles be avoided but a collision can also cause your plane to explode. Fortunately, you are equipped with limitless missiles and powerful shields which together provide formidable protection. Your fuel supply, however, is not limitless — the amount left is shown in the bottom left hand corner of the screen.

Once all the aliens in a wave have been killed, the game proceeds to the next level. Sometimes, no missiles are involved at all and it's a matter of weaving and dodging your way through a barrage of rota-droids and meteors. Most lethal of all, however, are the heat-seeking Mutile missiles which are very accurate.

Periodically, a mother ship appears and a successful docking restores fuel and shield power. This makes it possible to proceed to even higher levels and pit wits with even swifter and more deadly alien swarms. Should the docking fail, then you are forced to move on to the next level with less protection and less energy, making your chances of survival slender. The docking procedure must be very accurate — if you're slightly out and miss the jaws of the mothership, then the plane explodes.

Eight points are awarded for shooting an enemy craft; twenty-five, fifty, or seventy for a Mutile and more for successful docking. Bonus points are awarded for docking and completing waves. The score, lives remaining and shield power are all indicated in the status area at the base of the screen.

A high score guarantees you a place in the *Buccaneer* Hall Of Fame so it's possible to see how you fare against the best. Time to save the world from alien invasion again, pilot!



Blam, zoom. The spaceship approaches a hoard of angry aliens. Survival is the name of this pilot's game . . .

CRITICISM

● **" At base level, this is just a polished** Scramble **without the hills. The graphics, with the exception of the fantastic parallax scrolling, are flickery and rather unattractive, and the game, although playable, gets pretty boring after a while. The docking section is too easy, and the missile attacks frustrating, as they materialise when you're halfway through a screen. INSIGHT did better with** Vectron, **and I would recommend that they stick with products of that quality, 'cos I don't like** Buccaneer **much. "**

● *" When I heard that this was from the people behind* Vectron, *I nearly flipped. How can a company release a brilliant game like that and then produce something*

one game that everyone who likes good games should keep well clear of. "

● *" Remember in the good 'ole days when people could write? Well, those days have been forgotten by the folks at* MASTERTRONIC *— I can't remember the last time they gave some decent instructions. I'm sure that the game has some good bits in it somewhere, but whether or not you'll play that far is a different matter altogether. The game seems to be a classic 'I wonder if that will work,' or 'Well. . . . what do I do now?' game. The graphics are very mixed, with a good character set and border graphics, but the maze and play area are very basically designed. Once you realise that you can actually do things in this game then it urges you for another go — keep at it and you will be rewarded. "*

● " I'm sure that I'd find this one immensely playable if I knew how to play it, but as it suffers from the inevitable MASTERTRONIC 50 word scenario-come-instructions, there isn't really much to go on. It all seems very complicated, so getting into it would probably take a ages and require a fair amount of patience. The graphics used are colourful and large but they are not animated at all well and the 'microscreen' scrolls diabolically. The sound consists only of spot effects. There is no tune, which is a shame as it would have added to the atmosphere a little. After the initial confusion of playing this game had subsided somewhat, I found myself quite enjoying it. If you like a challenge (and believe me, working out how to play this one is) go out and give it a try. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, N left, M right, 0 fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fair response times, but the fire button is too far from the rest of the controls
Use of colour: good, lots used
Graphics: very jerky and hard to follow, but with nice characters
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: very jerky scrolling over a fairly large maze area
General rating: Difficult to get into, and it's doubtful whether the effort is justified

Use of computer	56%
Graphics	53%
Playability	48%
Getting started	20%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	50%
Overall	**49%**

as sloppy and unplayable as this? As a rule, I'm very partial to good blasting nasties games as I'm sure many other people are, but I'm afraid that this one really isn't good enough to be compelling or playable. The graphics are fairly large and the screen scrolls from right to left nicely but there are plenty of attribute problems. The sound is about average for cheapo FIREBIRD *games. Overall, it's not too bad for its price tag of two quid, but I started to get bored after a couple of goes. "*

● " Ho hum! Another budget game pretending to be a slick fast action shoot 'em up. Well you're not going to fool me mateys! The graphics are extremely flickery and move about in a very jerky manner. The sound is very basic and the colour is used much too lavishly — resulting in loads of attribute problems. I didn't find the game at all enthralling, mainly due to the fact that every screen has its own little flight pattern and it's easy to judge where the baddies are going to end up next. Then it's just a case of how fast you can press the fire button — which isn't very responsive. I found *Buccaneer* very boring to play and nothing like what I've come to expect from the top budget houses. *Buccaneer* is definitely a 'no no'. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: pause, abort, up, down, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: reasonable
Use of colour: quite good, but clashes occur often
Graphics: flickery sprites, but nice parallax scrolling
Sound: limited to spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling levels
General rating: There are plenty of shoot 'em ups on the Spectrum that are much better

Use of computer	54%
Graphics	56%
Playability	49%
Getting started	63%
Addictive qualities	45%
Value for money	51%
Overall	**49%**

CRASH MICRO GAMES ACTION

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MERELY MANGRAMMERELY

THE RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS . . .

Fortunately, I managed to avoid going the the PCW Show this year. There was a nasty moment when I though the Doc Martened One was going to apply the toe of his boot to a tender part of my anatomy and insist that I at least attended one of the quieter Trade Days, but in the end I managed to persuade Them Upstairs to let me stay in Ludlow and man the new-fangled telephone system that has just been installed in the office.

Several large carrier bags full of Spectrum games, photographs and press releases were dumped on my desk when I arrived this afternoon and I soon realised that the CRASH team had been gathering up goodies on my behalf. Delving into the cornucopia of offerings from the Show, it's clear that this Christmas is going to be as busy as ever, with an awful lot arcade machine conversions well underway for the winter months. So here goes.

Between them OCEAN and IMAGINE have got quite a few coin-op licences and TV/film tie-ins in the pipeline. By the time you read this, Konami's *Golf* — a sport I take to heart — should be in the shops, along with a conversion of the arcade hit *Galvan* from IMAGINE while the OCEAN team is putting the final touches to the game of the series *Miami Vice* and *It's A Knockout*. A new 3D game from DENTON DESIGNS is also on the way — *The Great Escape* and a film tie-in with *Highlander* should be out before October.

Other 'film' games due from Manchester between now and Christmas include *Top Gun*, *Cobra*, and *Short Circuit*. Coin-ops waiting in the wings for a pre-Christmas conversion include *Mag Max*, *Terra Cresta* and *Legend of Kage*. A hive of industry indeed.

Budget software is still on the upswing — we didn't actually manage to get hold of working copies of *Storm*, *Video Olympics* and *Formula One Simulator* from MASTERTRONIC in time for review this issue, but have just received *Bump Spike*, a volleyball simulation in which the player takes on the computer and *Video Poker* which promises all the fun of playing Las Vegas poker machines without the expense. A one-off payment of £1.99 secures endless games!

The £2.99 AMERICANA label has chosen to simulate a rather unusual sport — Bullfighting. A few quick goes in the office reveal that there are several levels to the game, which involves nifty capework to begin with and gradually takes the player up to sword and lance play. Gory, but good fun. *Thingy and the Doodahs* is a much less bloodthirsty game, which involves you in the search for enough money to replace your broken Spectrum. Full reviews of both these should appear next month.

FIREBIRD have rejuvenated their Silver Range and the Spectrum version of *Thrust* leads in the reviewers' Silver Range opinion poll at the moment. You control a little spaceship that suffers rather badly from the effects of gravity. *Kai Temple*, another combat game fought over platforms, a *Wally Week* derivative by the name of *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, a 3D *Alien 8* style arcade adventure by the name of *Bombscare* and yet another arcade adventure called *Olli and Lissa* in which you have to help re-house a ghost, rounds off the Silver Range offerings on show at Olympia. Oh, and of course there's the *Gyron* Arena game, that was used in the play off in FIREBIRD's *Gyron* competition. The winner motored through this special maze in eighteen minutes flat and collected a shiny new Porsche for his trouble. Sadly, no more Porsches are on offer, but for £1.99, the game should be a challenge welcomed by fans of the original.

A *Gauntlet* arcade machine was apparently set to free play on the US GOLD stand — in fact, arcade machines on free play abounded on the floor of the PCW Show according the ZZAP! lounge lizards who had a wonderful time clocking up high scores. The Spectrum version of *Gauntlet* should be available before too long, along with *Breakthru* and a host of other goodies.

Cartoon characters are also due to feature heavily in Spectrum games between now and Christmas. MELBOURNE HOUSE are apparently certain that *Asterix* will arrive in time for Christmas, while ACTIVISION have the licence to *Howard the Duck* and ARIOLASOFT have snapped up *The Centurions* and *The Challenge of the Gobots* as titles for release under their new label REAKTOR.

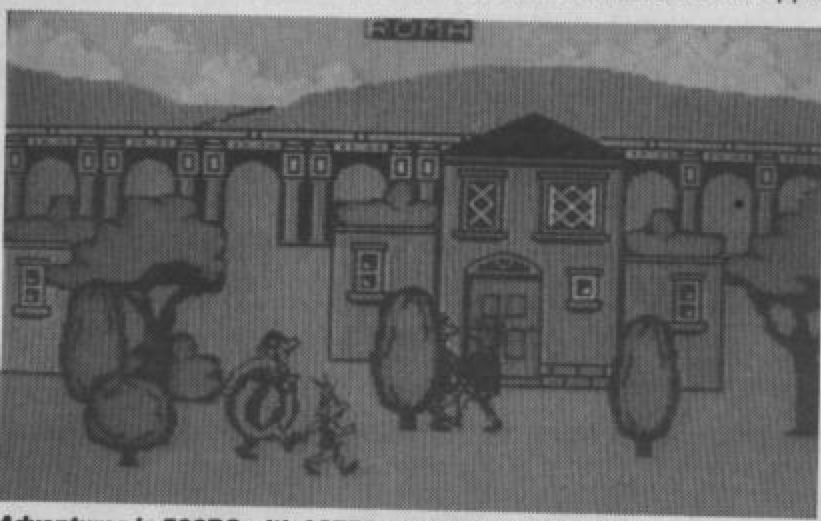
The crew at ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE also had a fair bit to show, apparently, and were even persuading reviewers to play craps for T Shirts in their hospitality suite. I'm not sure that encouraging our staff to gamble is a terribly wise idea, but they're all eagerly awaiting the arrival of BUG BYTE's *Miami Dice* as a result. *Glider Rider* was available at the show, and a couple of copies found their way back to Ludlow for review next issue.

News of the *Now Games II* compilation was wheedled out of VIRGIN's Bryn Gilmore at the show by the Doc Martened One, who tells me that *Sorcery*, *Nick Faldo Plays The Open*, *Codename Matt II*, *Everyone's A Wally*, and *View To A Kill* is the line-up for the £9.95 cassette due out towards the end of September or early in October. Compilations are going to feature heavily this Christmas, with just about every major software house planning to release 'albums' of their work in time to fill Christmas stockings throughout the land.

An interesting little game was on view on the DOMARK stand by all accounts — *Orbix the Terrorball* which features a little droid character fighting his way across a hideously dangerous 3D floorway with horrid holes dotted all around it. A vacuum operates under the surface and straying too close to a cavity results in an untimely death. There should be eight levels to the game, all of them full of aliens by the time it is released early in October.

Next month, we should be able to bring you full details of the ELECTRIC DREAMS release schedule — the Doc Martened One has agreed to allow Girlie Tipsters Hannah Smith and Gary Penn (from ZZAP!) to hire a car and travel to Southampton on a mission of discovery. *Hardball* from ADVANCE SOFTWARE looks very interesting — a screenshot of this new sports simulation arrived in the office and looked so much like a Commodore snap that it was passed over to the ZZAP! lads. But no, we learn, it was really a Spectrum shot — the graphics are very different indeed. Again, we should have full details in time for the November issue. And moments before this column had to be sent to the printers, MICROSPHERE's little package containing a demo version of *Contact Sam Cruise* arrived in the office. A bit of detective work on the Spectrum screen, presented in a very different fashion. . . .

There's no doubt that it's going to be a busy Christmas this year. Space once again runs out, so I'll leave you to cast an eye over the five pages of previews that follow.



Adventures in 500BC with ASTERIX AND THE MAGIC CAULDRON



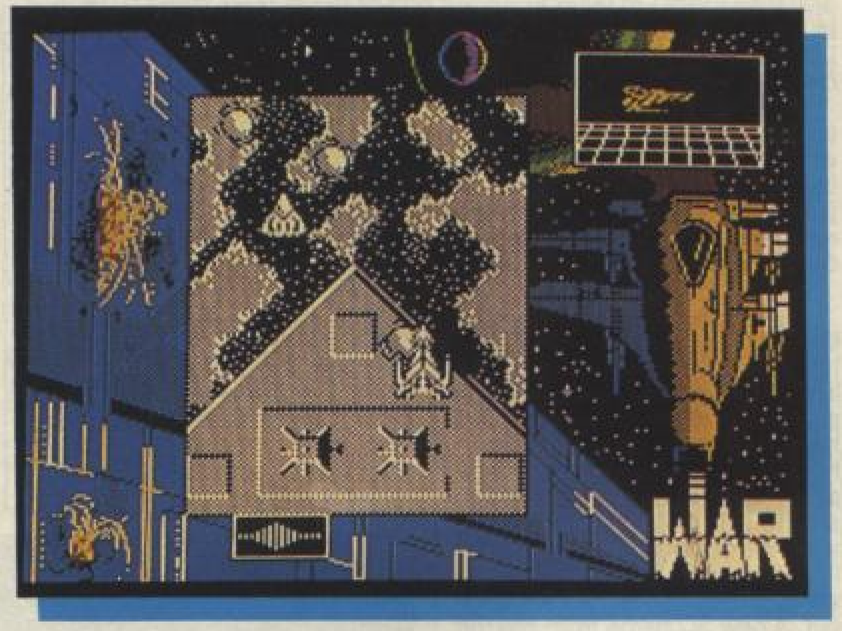
CONTACT SAM CRUISE is on its way. You play the role of a 1930's private detective in MICROSPHERE's latest game



OLE TORO: a sports simulation with a difference from AMERICANA

OFF TO W.A.R. WITH MARTECH

Here are a few dramatic moments for you to drool over until the finished game arrives



As mentioned in last issue's previews, the latest in line from MARTECH is *W.A.R.*, a shoot 'em up in the heroic tradition of alien zapping. With the Christmas market looming over us, everybody wants to ensure that as much zapping as possible gets underway. We managed to acquire an early, albeit incomplete version of the game at CRASH Towers and took a closer look.

The scenario goes like this. An advanced alien race has constructed an enormous space station, rotating it to induce artificial gravity. For various (and at the moment, ambiguous) reasons, it has to be destroyed. The station is made up of a series of immense cylinders, each of which must be destroyed before moving on to the next. Each one however, is heavily defended.

The loading screen is overlayed by a windowed menu once the game resides in memory and the player has the option of preparing different weapon systems for the battle to come. All the text in this section is written in a very esoteric typeface to capture atmosphere. After setup, the player can move directly to the game.

The game screen only takes up the same room as the menu, so only the centre portion of the screen is used. The first thing that strikes you about the game itself is what a wonderful example of vertical scrolling it is. The graphics are in the form of finely detailed monochrome images complete with shadowing. The surface of the enemy ship passes slowly beneath your vessel. In the background all the time is a dramatic starscape. As you swoop over the surface of the alien vessel, squadrons of defense ships fly out in formation, intent on your destruction. Apart from avoiding and destroying them, you must use your weaponry to cause as much damage as possible to the station's surface.

Another window to the top right of the screen displays the section of the game you're currently playing. However as the section above is the only one programmed into the game at this point, it's impossible to elaborate further. Hopefully, we will have a full copy to review next issue.

ELECTRIC DREAM'S DR. SPOCK GAME

ELECTRIC DREAM's forthcoming release *Prodigy* has a rather unusual scenario to say the least. The macabre Mechlabs are the scene of horrendous genetic experiments performed by the utterly evil Wardlock, the mechanical sorcerer. Products of his obscene dabblings are the Globjewels and the Bloberites who are just as horrible as their names suggest. Wandering around the Mechlabs is Solo a synthetic man and also a human baby (more about him in a mo), both the end results of the Wardlock's experiments. But unlike the Globjewels and the Bloberites Solo and the baby are desperate to escape from the living nightmare in which they find themselves trapped.

The Mechlabs consist of four separate 3D mazes, the Ice Zone, Fire Zone, Tech Zone and Vegie Zone each of which are differently coloured. Solo must trek through the mazes endeavouring to find power crystals. Once found these must be taken to the computer room and entered. The power crystal then reprogram the computer and open various hidden exits.

All very well but Solo has several problems that make his mission several times harder. For a start the Wardlock's mutants found roaming the Mechlabs (and understandably very cross at being created in such gruesome forms) are eager to vent their anger on someone, even if it is only Solo and not the Wardlock himself.

It wouldn't be too bad if he only had himself to think about but Solo has acquired a small friend. Nejo is the baby who attaches himself to Solo, following him around the mazes. Trouble is, babies need a lot of looking after. If Solo is to navigate his way out of the Mechlabs with Nejo and tell the world about the atrocities being committed inside then he must keep the baby in the pink so to say. Nejo's nappies need changing to avoid nappy rash and the inevitable baby pong, so fresh daipers have to be found along the way. Babies are by nature rather messy creatures so a quick wash and brush up is also needed to keep him tickety boo. A healthy diet is essential so food has to be collected.

If the maze is successfully completed then the Wardlock's dastardly plans will be revealed to all and the nightmare of genetic experiments will be over for ever.



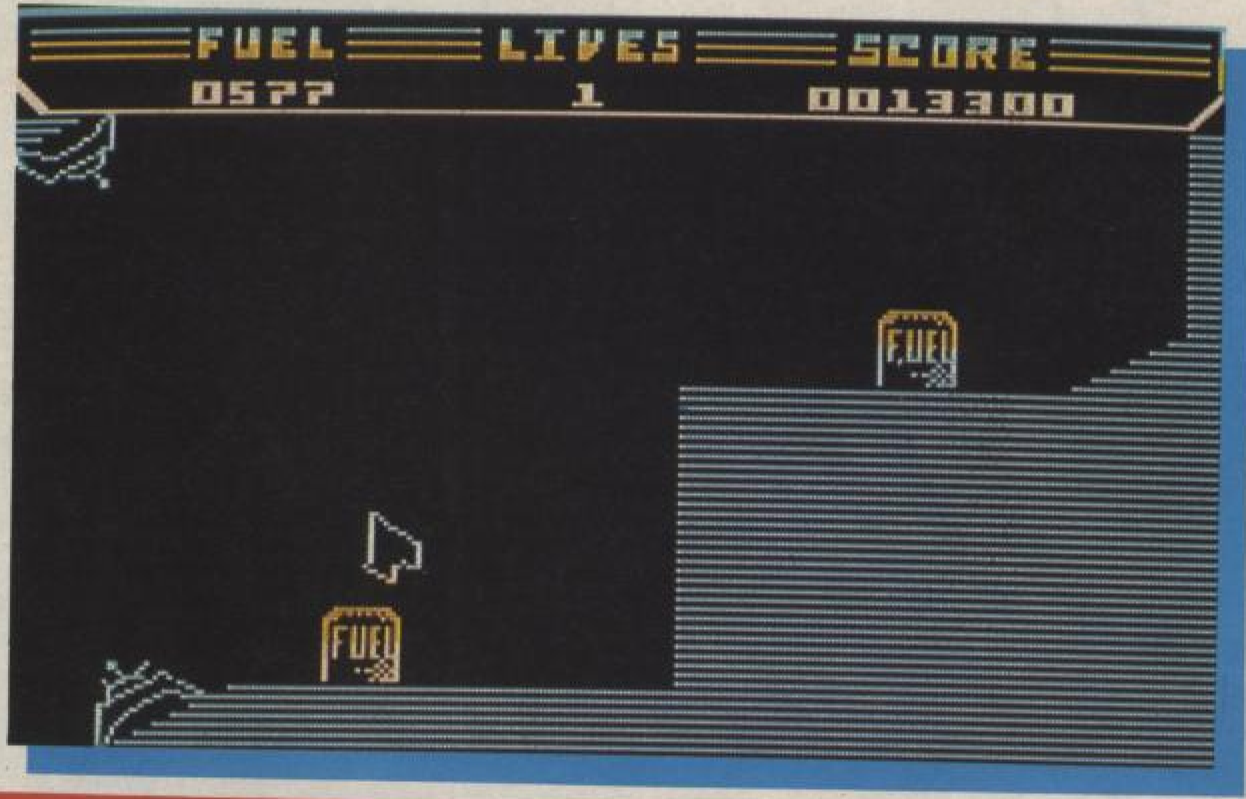
A pretty-looking status area surrounds the monochromatic 3D mazes in PRODIGY, the arena in which Solo and baby Nejo fight for survival.

The RESISTANCE FIGHT BACK!

After much success on the Commodore, BBC and Amstrad computers, *Thrust* has finally been converted to the Spectrum. The resistance is planning a major offensive against the Intergalactic Empire. Planning well in advance they decide to steal several battle-grade starships, but they have no power source of the capacity needed to run them. You play the part of a resistance fighter who has been given the task to do some more stealing and take the necessary pods from the Empire's storage plants. By firing shots at the main power plant you can temporarily disable the limpet guns that are placed in crucial points on the planets. But don't get too trigger happy or you'll find yourself blowing up the planet with you still on it — and the pods will be lost for ever.

On the other hand, if you go on to the planet, collect the required fuel for your travels, steal the pod, shoot the power plant and escape within ten seconds, you'll be awarded with a double bonus and a free trip to the next planet. On later planets you will encounter reverse gravity and invisble walls. All of these may prove a bit too hard for a resistance Thruster who only posesses a gun and limited shield — Or will they? Priced at a budget £1.99 from FIREBIRD, *Thrust* is available now.

What's this? Fuel left lying around is just asking to be picked up. But being fired at by the nasty zappers could prove fatal



TAKEN FOR A RIDE?

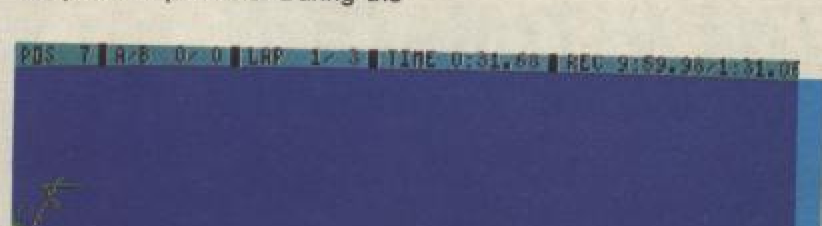
Available now is the latest game from DIGITAL INTERGRATION, the authors of *Tomahawk* and *Fighter Pilot* is *TT Racer*. They have dropped out of the sky and on to their bikes with this latest addition to their simulation range. *TT Racer*, which was previewed last issue, puts you behind the handle bars of a choice of four bikes — from a meagre 80cc effort, up to the full blown 500cc.

After two years programming, Rod Swift seems to have come up with the closest thing to actually risking life and limb racing around at 175 mph. DI have spent a lot of time getting the feel of the bike exactly right — even down to asking for some professional advice from Suzuki's top riders, Kevin Swartz and Paul Lewis.

Before the race, you can adjust the bike to your characteristics so that you can complete a good practice lap and qualify in the highest position possible. During the race, you can make pitstops to refuel and change tyres. What you get for the £9.95 is the obligatory Lenslok pack, a very in-depth manual for your racing career and a chance to win a day out with Suzuki. A full review is promised next month.



The rider's eye view of the opposition while you sit on the grid. Will you be fast enough to show them the same view of you?



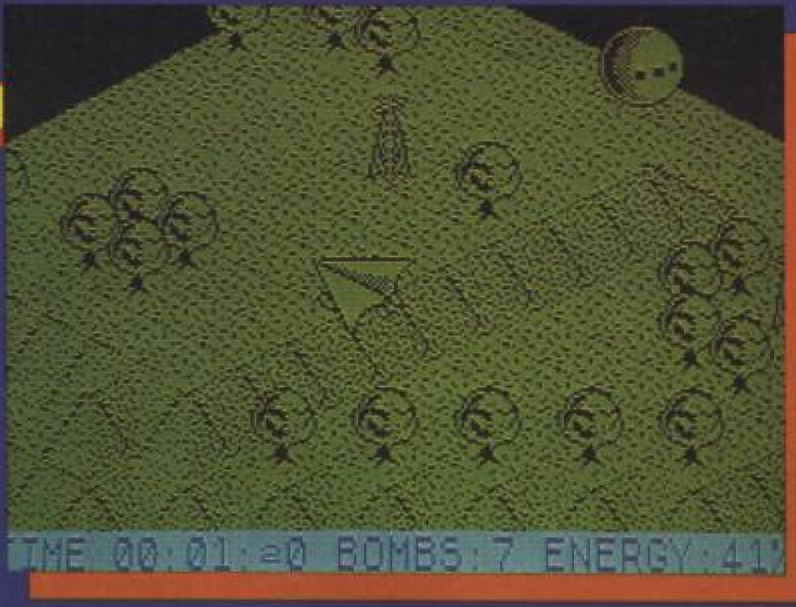
Whoooah! Scraping knees on the bends is the only way to keep up with the rest of riders.

PREVIEW

A BUDGET BONANZA

To be released by FIREBIRD at the same time as *Thrust* are two other games, *Bombscare* and *Olli and Lissa*. In *Bombscare* you are a robot called Arnold who has been placed somewhere in the future. Arnold's job is the local Bomb Disposal Robot and he has been called out to help defuse a large time bomb that has been placed on the planet, Neptune. Unfortunatly for Arnold (and you), the tools that he needs to carry out the task are scattered about the planet as well. Arnold the brave is sent to solve the planet's problems but is hampered by some enemy aliens, but if he is quick enough he can use his enemy absorbing device to dispose of them. You must help Arnold in his task or the planet will be doomed.

In the second of the budget games, *Olli and Lissa*, you play the part of Olli. Shilmore Castle, situated somewhere in the Scottish Highlands, is under threat of being shipped stone by stone across the Atlantic to the U.S. Alarmed by this, Olli and Lisa jump to the rescue of their friend, Sir Humphrey, who is the castle ghost and a bit peaved at the idea of moving to The States. Humphrey decides that humans are only scared of ghosts that they can't see (who's he kidding?), so you must help find the eight ingredients to the invisible potion. *Olli and Lissa* is a semi-monochromatic adventure and priced at a bugdettie £1.99.



***Bombscare** With no Halfords shop on Neptune, Arnold potters around searching for the tools with which to defuse the time bomb*



Poor old Ollie seems a bit confused. He's supposed to pick up the teapot but this doesn't seem the right time for a quick brew

THE ULTIMATE IN PRIVATE TRANSPORT?

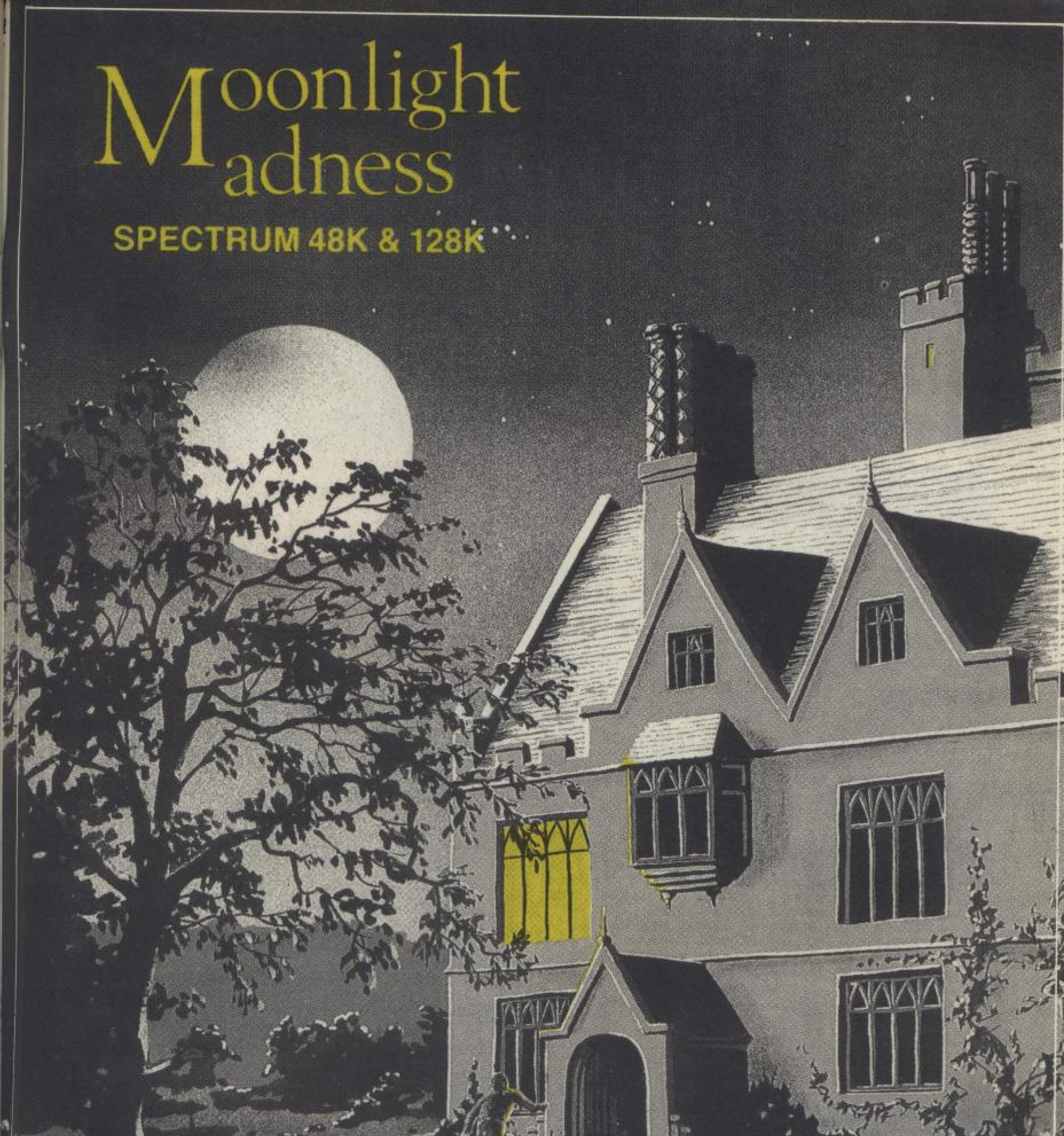
The latest from the folks QUICKSILVA is *Glider Rider*. Programmed by BINARY DESIGN (the folks that did *Max Headroom*), *Glider Rider* starts off by planting you firmly on the seat of a small collapsible E37 motor bike. With this between your legs and a rucksack on your back, you must drive around the 100 screen big planet looking for a big enough slope to allow you to get off your bike and launch your Mark 5 glider.

With your glider you must destroy the ten external reactors and rendezvous with the awaiting submarine that is placed somewhere in the ocean surrounding your island. If this is too much, then you can just destroy as many operatives and operational buildings as possible and pick up a supply of ammunition. After all, with a motor bike in your rucksack, you only have enough room for nine hand grenades, which can only be dropped from the glider. Ground to air lasers and missiles will sap your energy, so be careful how you fly!

They say that the main compound is impenetrable, but you will be the only one to know for sure. *Glider Rider* is available shortly at £8.95 for both 48K and 128K Spectrums on the same cassette. The 128K version features enhanced sound, by the way of a David Whittaker tune bashing and beeping it's way throughout the game. CRASH will definitely be reveiwing *Glider Rider* next month.



Things are getting a little tough for Glider Rider. One shot and the only way out is down



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DURELL GET BORED WITH RESCUING DAMSELS

DURELL have sometimes been accused of making their games too complicated. However, with their new release, *Thanatus*, they have made a considered effort to produce a game along a simple idea and story-line.

You control a big bad stomping dragon who rampages around the countryside generally being a nuisance in good dragon tradition. The idea behind all this stomping is to collect energy and experience until your dragon can cast the ultimate spell and rid the Earth of a certain someone.

This is where it all becomes a bit vague. DURELL and the programmer have come into conflict over what personality the dragon should assume. DURELL see laser-breath as a Good Dragon, one who kills nasty people; however, the programmer feels that dragons are not by nature and tradition nice creatures to know and that this one should terrorise innocent people while at the same time eating as many virginal maidens as he can sink his fangs into. Whichever personality the dragon assumes the game will largely involve flying around bombing Knights of the Realm with large boulders, scorching castle gates down and molesting young females.

All this (naturally enough) requires large quantities of energy and Mr Dragon only has a certain amount available. The faster he flies and the more fire he breathes the quicker his energy is used up. This lost energy can be replenished by chomping up distressed damsels.

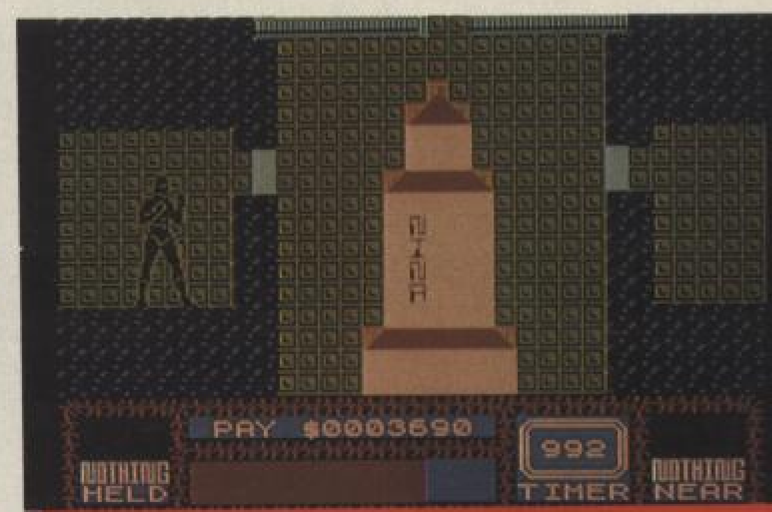
The action swerves through varied settings from mysterious seas of moonlight dappled water to dark and frightening caves. Reality is added to the scenes through parallax scrolling, moving the background slower than the foreground to create a sense of 3D. The dragon is also a manoeuvrable little devil. He can turn around in mid-flight and pick up objects to use as ammunition, he can potter around on the ground and if you introduce him to a stretch of water, he sinks in slowly up to his knees and then begins to swim in a very dignified sort of way.

Dragons, you'll be pleased to hear, aren't invincible. Knights can fire arrows at his corpulent form from the ground and brave lancers will try and impale him through to the heart in order to save a damsel from distress. Not only that, but rival scaly friends like to share a succulent lass and they can be well and truly scorched if they grow too tiresome.

The game is in its very early stages at the moment so details are scarce. DURELL are hoping for a September release date as progress seems to be going quite well. But however the game turns out it should give you a chance to be quite dragonesque and even terrorise a few innocent people for a while. All in a day's work for a big, bad dragon really . . .



Swimming along in a dignified manner or flying through the air, the fire-breathing dragon is an awesome and terrifying creature who likes his damsels medium-rare.



MORE SABOTAGE

The Girlie Ninja Strikes Back! It was your Big Brother who starred in *Saboteur* from DURELL and it seems that the bad guys were so annoyed at his success that they put out a contract and had your Bro' eliminated.

Now it's revenge time. Are you girl enough to close down the bad guys' operation once and for all (and get rich in the process). *Saboteur II* from DURELL.

GREMLIN GO FOR GOAL!

GREMLIN GRAPHICS are leaping enthusiastically towards Christmas — and they have some very interesting products in progress. Not only are they the folks behind the official *Gauntlet* coin-op conversion but they've also got some original games on the way.

Of course there's *Avenger*, the follow-up to *Way of the Tiger* which we took a peek at last issue, but GREMLIN are getting into ball games in a fairly big way. *Footballer of the Year* adds a strategic twist to footie — it's up to you, as a promising young star, to scheme, plot, practice and score goals on the way to the highest accolade of the football world. *Trailblazer* is another ball game completely.

There's this forward scrolling roadway suspended in space, see John, and you've got to dribble your ball down it. Sounds easy? Well of course it isn't meant to be. There are holes and nasty gaps in the chequered roadway that zooms 'out' of the screen, and a mistimed leap sends the little sphere plumetting into the depths of space. Funny squares on the floorway do funny things the ball's speed of roll and boing of bounce — and touching a bounce-reducing bit of floor just before leaping over a giant chasm is known in the trade as 'a bad move'. Plenty of frantic action to be had blazing a trail down the cosmic highway . . .

Zooming along the tiled roadway of intergalactic space is no doddle, especially if you touch the wrong bit of the floor. TRAILBLAZER, on its way from Gremlin Graphics





ELITE'S AUTUMN EXTRAVAGANZA

As the autumn leaves fall and the harvests are gathered in, Hotline Chart-toppers ELITE will be releasing another crop of games certain to while away a good many winter evenings. And they are all priced at £7.95, so the damage to the pocket should be minimised . . .

Taking two of their arcade conversions one stage further, *Commando 86* and *Bombjack II* should make an appearance during the month of October. *Commando 86* is very much a variation on a theme — one player can fight through a hostile environment that scrolls in eight directions or two chums can team up and fight their way through the vertically scrolling landscape.

Bombjack II combines a bit of strategy with the fairly straightforward platform/arcade elements of the original. In this platform-collector your little character won't be able to float around the screen but will have to work through a total of thirty screens fighting nasties and collecting objects — in the right order for maximum points. Dragon beings patrol platforms at the start of a new sheet, and a good shove disposes of *them*. As time progresses, however, the Dragons mutate into fighting creatures that take a bit of beating, then mutate again into creatures that can leap between platforms. Finally, if you've taken ages on a screen, the nasties mutate once more and become intelligent — they come to get you.

Two more arcade conversions are in the pipeline too. *Akari Warriors* is on schedule for a November release, and follows the look and feel of the original closely. It's another *Commando* style combat game in which one or two players can Rambo their way through a scrolling landscape, but this time you can turn round and fire behind you. Mines, on land and in rivers, have to be avoided, enemy soldiers grenaded or shot and bridges crossed rather than burnt. Every so often a tank appears in the playing area and it's possible to leap aboard and drive around taking advantage of the extra firepower and protection on offer — but make sure to keep the fuel needle off empty! Watch out for those helicopter gunships, an' all . . .



Wading through a river in the arcade version of AKARI WARRIOR, soon to be gracing your Spectrum screens courtesy of Elite

The other arcade conversion is definitely going to be a biggie . . . Yes, it's *Space Harrier*. A version of Sega's classic coin-op is currently being written for the Spectrum by **Keith** *Ghosts and Goblins* **Burchill**. While there's no way the full impact of the stereo sound system and sit-upon cockpit of the arcade machine can be achieved on the Spectrum, Keith has already sorted out a very neat chequered scrolling ground and plonked a couple of test sprites on the screen. The feel of this early testpiece, although it is far removed from the final game, is enough to inspire confidence that the final game should play very well indeed.

And finally a team of Scottish programmers are putting the finishing touches to *Stringfellow Hawk's Airwolf*, a helicopter game featuring four way scrolling in a maze-like world of caverns and tunnels. At the moment all the sprites have been put into the playing area along with the helicopter you control, but the final gameplay is still being sorted out

An early demo version of STRINGFELLOW HAWK'S AIRWOLF, another November release from the Elite stable. At the moment the gameplay is being developed — all the sprites and controls are there





ON THE SCREEN is back again after a short break. This month, several artists line up to have their work exhibited in the pages of CRASH and then immortalised as a full colour screen dump produced by **DIMENSION GRAPHICS**. The friendly people at **RAINBIRD** pay for the colour dump to be made, and then wrap it snugly in a frame before sending it on to the artist who created the image.



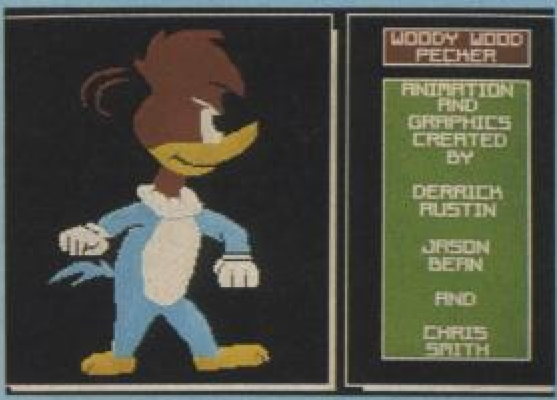
Steve Green has certainly captured the McMahon style with his Spectrum rendition of Pa and Mean, the antiheros taken from the pages of 2000AD. The ugliness and menace that lies behind this unpleasant duo glares out of the screen and assaults the viewer . . .

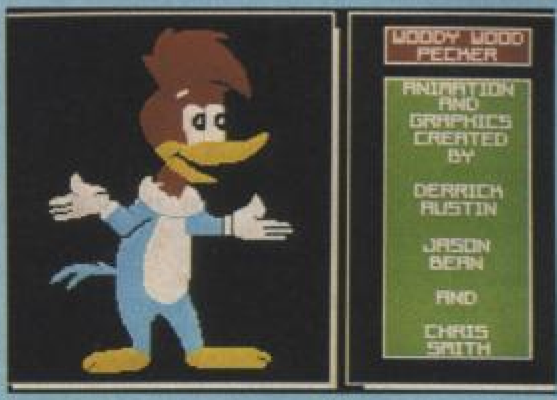


Mr Green is clearly free from Thrillsucker attacks — here we have another two-member team, this time DR and Quince, the masters of mayhem and crackpot schemes, driving out of the screen to wreak havoc in the life of the viewer.



To round off his trilogy of comicbook characters, Steve created this homage to Halo Jones, without doubt one of the most popular characters to grace the pages of 2000AD.







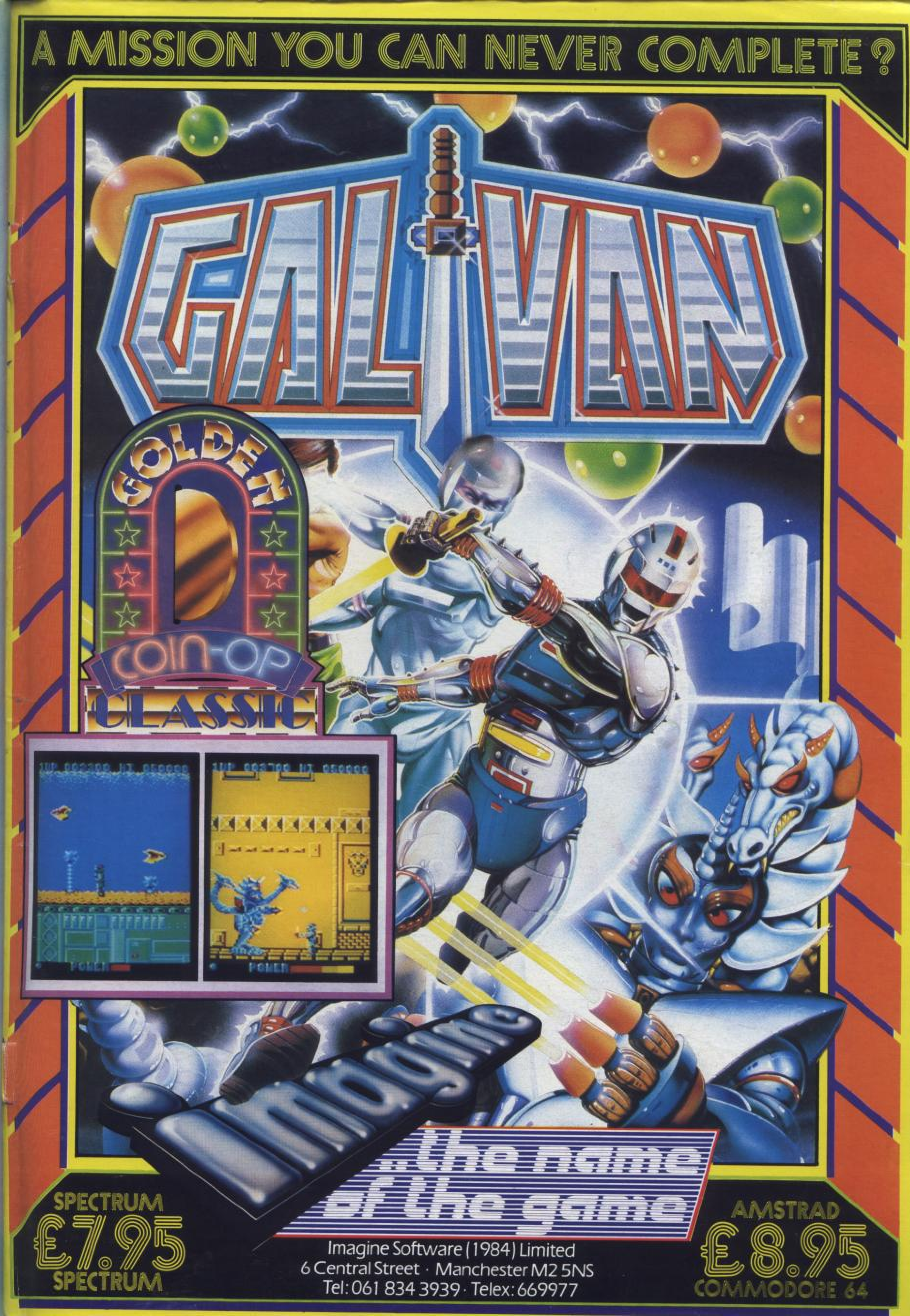
Our very own Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith, was sent a cassette containing an animated sequence starring Woody Woodpecker — produced by a triumvirate from Haxby. Woody dances around on the screen, full of the joys of being a woodpecker. Derrick Austin, Jason Bern and Chris Smith are the men behind this animated bird. . . .



A total change of pace and tempo is provided by Simon Allen's fantasy rendition of a winged female creature perched on the branches of a tree growing in a surreal wasteland. A land with a purple sun in which yellow-feathered humanoids struggle to eke out an existence. The wistful expression on the central being's face reveals much about the conditions that must prevail in her homeland.



Ceri Thomas displays a modicum of biting wit with the choice of company logo in this loading screen she created for an imaginary game. The hero of this unwritten game is seen legging it from the portals of an Aztec temple, no doubt running off with the diamonds mentioned in the title of the game that has yet to be written. . . .


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